



# **The Junior British Army Officer: Experience and Identity, 1793-1815**

by

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## Abstract

The bulk of British army officers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were junior officers, namely officers who held the rank of captain, or lower. Scholarship revealing the intellectual and cultural life of the British army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars is expanding; however, junior officers have received little specific scholarly attention. This thesis is the first full-length study of junior army officers, and has 'identity and experience' as its central themes. A combination of military and cultural history, this thesis examines British junior officers as products of the military and of Georgian society, and draws on histories of masculinity, family life, and national and political identities to interpret their experiences. This thesis focuses on the lived experiences of junior officers, and interrogates three main types of personal accounts, namely letters, diaries and journals, and memoirs. This group of officers developed a set of sensibilities and perspectives that were bound to their middling status within the army's hierarchy. Junior officers were imbued with significant authority over the rank and file, yet were subjected to the authority of superior officers. As some of the youngest members of the officer corps, junior officers straddled the lines between the civilian and military spheres, and between youth and adulthood.

This thesis argues that the tensions inherent in such a position saw junior officers develop an identity *as* junior officers, which shaped other aspects of their identity. Junior officers fashioned identities as 'polite gentlemen', with the regimental mess inculcating a sense of gentlemanly value. Junior officers displayed careerist and professional ambitions, and hoped for promotion to deliver them from their subordinate position. While the honour culture of the officer corps could conflict with some new officers' sense of masculinity, junior officers found themselves embroiled in a performative culture of honour, which included fighting duels. Although military service entailed separation from family and friends, junior officers were adept at staying in touch with family members, with some officers contriving to bring their families into the field. These family bonds proved strong enough to outweigh comparatively fluid regimental loyalties. Drawing on their social standing and the language of sensibility, junior officers styled themselves as brave patriarchs, leading from the front and caring for their men. Serving within a truly 'British' army, junior officers' service had the effect of dissolving national differences, while their conceptions of patriotism broadened as the Revolutionary War gave way to war with Napoleon.



## Introduction

George Wood, the son of an army officer, was commissioned as an ensign in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot in August 1806 and was initially enamoured with his career choice. Wood recalled in his memoir that he was: ‘much struck with the new mode of life I was about to lead, from its apparent splendour.’<sup>1</sup> Wounded in the Peninsula at the 1813 Battle of Vitoria, Wood was promoted to captain in 1814, before retiring to half-pay in 1816, meaning that he would never attain field rank, despite his decade of military service. Wood’s conception of himself as a soldier was inherently bound to his middling status within the military hierarchy, which at once invested him with considerable moral and personal authority over the rank and file, yet condemned him to subordination at the hands of superior officers. His 1825 memoir, *The Subaltern Officer*, had the stated aim of drawing attention to the experiences of subalterns during the Napoleonic Wars, with Wood claiming: ‘The Journals and Memoirs of Private Soldiers have been frequently published; but not those of Subaltern Officers, on whom so much depends, and whose duties are of a different nature, and far more arduous than those imposed upon individuals in the ranks.’<sup>2</sup> In addition to fatiguing responsibilities, Wood was galled at his subservience to superior authority, and was overjoyed at becoming his ‘own master’ upon retirement, ‘not subject to orders, reprimands, or martial law, I found myself as light as a bird that has had the door of its cage thrown open and been set at liberty.’<sup>3</sup> Evidently, Wood believed that subalterns were a feature of the army in their own right, at once distinct from the rankers they commanded, and the superior officers who commanded them.

George Wood was one member of a group which expanded considerably in size during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Two decades of nearly constant warfare with France saw the British regular army expand from a size of 50,000 men in 1793, to a peak of 250,000 in 1813.<sup>4</sup> This expansion was accompanied by an increase in the number of officers in the army: on the eve of war with Revolutionary France, there were 3,107 officers on full-pay. In 1814, there were 10,590 full-pay officers in the British service.<sup>5</sup> The bulk of officers in the British army were the junior level officers below field rank, namely ensigns, cornets, second-lieutenants, lieutenants, second-captains and captains. While some junior officers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars would have long and illustrious military careers that would

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<sup>1</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern*, p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> David Gates, ‘The Transformation of the Army, 1783-1815’, in *The Oxford History of the British Army*, ed. Ian Beckett and David G. Chandler (Oxford, 1994), p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Glover, *Wellington’s Army in the Peninsula, 1808-1814* (Newton Abbot, 1977), p. 36. These figures refer to officers of the infantry, cavalry, and technical branches. They exclude garrison and veteran battalions.

extend long into the mid-Victorian era, far more would end their careers as junior officers, either being reduced to half-pay in the years following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, or retiring after finding promotion rates too sluggish at the war's end.

Inevitably, such a large cohort of officers included individuals of diverse social and national backgrounds, outlooks, and experiences. At one end of the scale, there were blue-blooded aristocrats, who rubbed shoulders with other well-heeled officers in prestigious Guards and cavalry regiments, while at the other end there were officers who managed to hurdle the social divide and were commissioned from the ranks into less celebrated line infantry regiments. In between, there were officers from a variety of land-owning and professional backgrounds. One point of commonality within this diverse group was their middling status within the British military machine. Complicating their position further was the gentlemanly culture of the officer corps, which encouraged junior officers to consider themselves worthy of interacting with even the most senior officers as 'polite gentlemen'. The tensions inherent in such a position provided junior officers with a shared set of sensibilities, aspirations, and complaints, albeit ones that were coloured by differences between individual officers. Virtually every junior officer, regardless of social and regimental background, yearned for promotion and recognition, complained of the strictures of the military hierarchy, and was conscious of their relatively limited perspective on the war. Although these characteristics could be more pronounced amongst subaltern officers, these sentiments did not dissipate if officers were promoted to a captaincy, suggesting that there was considerable continuity between the experiences of subalterns and captains.

A combination of military and cultural history, this thesis is a study of officers at these junior ranks, whose particular place within the army and Georgian society has been the subject of limited historical inquiry. This thesis examines only British and Irish officers serving in the British army, and does not explore the experiences of foreign officers in the British service. Foreign officers in the British army were likely to have interpreted their experiences through a different cultural framework to their British comrades, which would almost certainly have produced a different set of responses and identities which are deserving of their own study. Revolving around the central themes of experience and identity, this thesis explores how junior officers' cultural backgrounds and military experiences shaped their concepts of themselves as soldiers, gentlemen, family members, friends, leaders, and Britons. Drawing on personal testimonies from seventy-seven British officers who served as junior officers in the infantry, cavalry, and technical branches of the army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, this thesis is a study of junior officers in all their guises, and how they thought and wrote about their own place within the British army and society during the period 1793-1815.

### ***British Junior Officers in History***

Befitting the length and scale of the wars, the historiography of Britain's role in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars is vast. Military historians have covered substantial historical ground to provide a rich overview of the conflicts. There are several wide-ranging narratives of the conflicts, in addition to which, there are also more focused campaign and battle studies, such as Charles Esdaile's consummate survey of the Peninsular War.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these campaign narratives, historians have also explored how the British army was administered and reformed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>7</sup> J.A. Houlding's study of the training of the eighteenth-century British army up to the beginning of war with Revolutionary France provides important context for the army in the period 1793-1815.<sup>8</sup> The methodological approach of the 'new military history' has seen an increased focus on the relationship between warfare and eighteenth-century British society and culture. Warfare has been recognised as having a pivotal role in shaping British society during the eighteenth century. In *Britons*, Linda Colley argued that war with France was crucial in the formation of a 'British' national identity, while John Brewer, Stephen Conway, Anthony Page, and Kathleen Wilson have all explored how the demands of warfare affected the British state and politics.<sup>9</sup> There are several studies into the impact of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars on Britain and Britain's response to the wars, such as Clive Emsley's history of British society during the wars, and John Cookson's study of the volunteer movement.<sup>10</sup> The focus on the organisation of the British army, and the effect of war on British society, however, has ensured that the character of the army has been understudied, as historians have traditionally treated the army

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<sup>6</sup> Narratives of the conflict can be found in: Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815* (London, 1999), pp. 193-220; Anthony Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years War, 1744-1815: Enlightenment, Revolution, and Empire* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 42-59; Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1807-1815* (New Haven, CT, 1996). More focused studies include: Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London, 2003); Rory Muir, *Salamanca, 1812* (New Haven, CT, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge, 1963); Alan J. Guy, ed., *The Road to Waterloo: The British Army and the Struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France* (London, 1990); Glover, *Wellington's Army*.

<sup>8</sup> J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1795-1815* (Oxford, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation: 1707-1837*, revised ed. (New Haven, CT, 2014), pp. 17-8; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (London, 1989); Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006); Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years War*; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (London, 1979); John Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997). Other studies include: Roger Knight, *Britain against Napoleon: The Organisation of Victory, 1793-1815* (London, 2014); Emma Vincent Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars against Revolutionary France, 1792-1802* (Aldershot, 1998); Mark Philip, ed., *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot, 2006).

as an institution that existed separate to the rest of Georgian Britain.<sup>11</sup> Stephen Brumwell, Sylvia Frey, and Roger Norman Buckley have all produced important social histories of the army during the mid-late eighteenth century, while Edward J. Coss has examined the social backgrounds and campaign experiences of British rankers during the Peninsular War.<sup>12</sup> These studies, however, have been the exception rather than the rule. This stands in contrast to France, where considerable scholarship has examined the relationship between the French army and French society during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>13</sup>

Recently, historians have begun to fill this gap in scholarship by more thoroughly exploring the character of the Georgian army, and its relationship to eighteenth-century British society and culture.<sup>14</sup> Crucially, this expanded scope has resulted in a greater consideration of the combatants who made up the Georgian army, with the aim of understanding how soldiers' cultural backgrounds shaped their interpretations of the military experience.<sup>15</sup> This approach has seen gender, identity, and religion become important areas of research with regards to the Georgian army.<sup>16</sup> Two recent studies of British combatants during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars exemplify this approach. Catriona Kennedy surveyed the experiences of soldiers on and off the battlefield in her study of how individuals narrated their experiences of

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<sup>11</sup> Kevin Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society and Tradition, 1807-15* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 3; William P. Tatum, 'Challenging the New Military History: The Case of the Eighteenth-Century British Army Studies', *History Compass*, 5 (2007), pp. 72-84.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge, 2002); Roger Norman Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies: Society and the Military in the Revolutionary Age* (Gainesville, FL, 1998); Sylvia R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin TX, 1981); Edward J. Coss, *All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Norman, OK, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> For example, see John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Boulder, CO, 1996); Jean-Paul Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen Soldiers to Instruments of Power* (Princeton, NJ, 1988); Alan Forrest, *The Soldiers of the French Revolution and Empire* (London, 2002); David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston, 2007); Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grand Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> For a review of recent literature, see Charles Esdaile, 'The British Army in the Napoleonic Wars: Approaches Old and New', *English Historical Review*, 130 (2015), pp. 123-37.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of this approach, see Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, 'Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, 1740-1815', *War in History*, 20 (2013), pp. 144-59; Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, 'Wellington's Men: The British Soldier of the Napoleonic Wars', *History Compass*, 13 (2015), pp. 288-96.

<sup>16</sup> John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 23-42; Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, & Jane Rendall, eds., *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830* (Basingstoke, 2010); Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack, eds., *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms* (Basingstoke, 2012). Studies over a longer period include: Jennine Hurl-Eamonn, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'* (Oxford, 2014); Michael Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London, 2005); Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, eds., *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815* (Liverpool, 2014).

war throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>17</sup> Delving into British soldiers' identities as travellers and ethnographers, Gavin Daly has explored the attitudes of British soldiers towards their Portuguese and Spanish allies during the Peninsular War, and revealed how cross-cultural contact informed soldiers' conceptions of British national identity.<sup>18</sup> Central to these histories was a consideration of British soldiers' lives away from the battlefield, with soldiers' time spent sightseeing or dancing integrated into the military experience. What has emerged from this scholarship is a better-rounded image of Georgian soldiers and officers; however, there is still considerable scope for exploring the cultural dimensions of the army during this period.

This thesis sits within the latter wave of historiography. Even within this expanding field, junior officers have been afforded little specific space. Owing to the work of Michael Glover on the system of commissions and promotions, the social background of new officers and the basic features of the lives of junior officers during the Napoleonic Wars are well-established.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Alan J. Guy produced a study of the financial lives of eighteenth-century officers, the patterns of which are relevant to the study of junior officers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, while Rory Muir has explored the functional role of junior officers in battle.<sup>20</sup> It is only recently that the cultural lives of junior officers have begun to be specifically explored. Neil Ramsey examined the authorial style of subaltern memoirists; however, it is only the recent work of Catriona Kennedy that has seen junior officers studied as an historical group in their own right.<sup>21</sup> Kennedy examined the implications of military service on subalterns' sense of masculinity, and also revealed how new subalterns negotiated the passage between the civilian and military worlds.<sup>22</sup> This lack of scholarship devoted specifically to junior officers may be a result of the tendency to see officers as a homogenous block, owing to the social distinction between officers and the ranks. In his study of the British ranker in the Peninsula, for example, Coss viewed the officer corps as united by their wealth, which prevented officers from forming and understanding of rankers' experiences and motivations.<sup>23</sup> While it is true that junior

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<sup>17</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), especially chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>18</sup> Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1980), pp.223-35; *Wellington's Army*, pp. 36-44, 76-89.

<sup>20</sup> Alan J. Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and Administration in the British Army, 1714-1763* (Manchester, 1985); Rory Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon* (New Haven, CT, 1998), chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>21</sup> Neil Ramsey, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780-1835* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 137-65.

<sup>22</sup> Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics*, pp. 127-46; Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 41-8.

<sup>23</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 123-5.

officers' sensibilities had more in common with their superiors than their subordinates, viewing the officer corps as a whole overlooks important nuances in the experiences of officers. Furthermore, junior officers' relative obscurity and inability to influence the direction of the war effort does not lend their stories to the grand histories or biographies. This stands in contrast to the numerous histories of celebrated commanders, most notably the Duke of Wellington.<sup>24</sup>

Owing to the wealth of primary source material authored by junior officers, their accounts have been regularly included in wider studies; however, this has normally been as an adornment to the narrative, rather than the focus of historical enquiry. This thesis, therefore, is the first full-length study to focus specifically on the experiences of junior officers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. As a combination of cultural and military history, it is not a history of junior officers' function in battle, or an assessment of the role they played in the eventual defeat of the French armies.<sup>25</sup> This thesis is a study of the cultural and intellectual life of British junior officers, and explores how junior officers' status as products of Georgian society informed their interpretation of the military experience and, subsequently, shaped their military identities.

### ***Soldiers and Authors***

Identities are personal, and although they are shaped by external factors, personal testimonies are revealing as to how people form individual or collective modes of belonging.<sup>26</sup> As noted by Alan Forrest, Étienne François, and Karen Hagemann, memory is communicated by numerous mediums, all of which have the common characteristic of providing a record of what was important to individuals at certain points in time, 'beyond periods of collective and cultural oblivion.'<sup>27</sup> This thinking is useful when applied to studies of identity. Personal accounts not only reveal what events individuals considered important, but are also suggestive as to the individual and collective perspectives the author considered as worthy of recording, and to the image of the self that the author chose to project to their audience. As prolific letter, journal, and memoir writers, junior officers are particularly open to this type of historical analysis. As all officers were required to be literate, it stands to reason that officers would produce more

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<sup>24</sup> Michael Glover, *Wellington as Military Commander* (London, 1968); Huw J. Davies, *Wellington's Wars: The Making of a Military Genius* (New Haven, CT, 2012); Rory Muir, *Wellington*, 2 Vols. (New Haven, CT, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> For an assessment of the competency of the British officer corps, see Bruce Collins, 'Effectiveness and the British Officer Corps, 1793-1815', in *Britain's Soldiers*, pp. 57-76.

<sup>26</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> Alan Forrest, Étienne François, and Karen Hagemann, 'Introduction: Memories of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture', *War Memories: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture*, ed. Alan Forrest, Étienne François, and Karen Hagemann (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 21.

accounts than the rank and file, who had much lower rates of literacy. In addition to higher literacy rates, British combatants of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were writing at a time when the stories of rankers and low-ranking officers gained broad appeal. Before the late-eighteenth century, personal accounts of war had been the preserve of high-ranking and celebrated officers. As demonstrated by Yuval Noah Harari, the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries were a watershed period for soldiers' writings in Europe, as the recognition of individual soldiers as thinking and autonomous beings legitimised the stories of low-ranking officers and soldiers.<sup>28</sup> The output of soldier authors from this period is borne out by the quantity of accounts identified by historians: Robert Burnham has identified over 300 published accounts of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>29</sup>

This thesis draws on eighty-seven personal accounts written by junior officers that fall into three broad categories: letters, diaries and journals, and memoirs, with each category comprising roughly one-third of each of the sources used. In addition to these sources, there is also one poem written by an anonymous subaltern, and two political tracts. While several of these accounts exist only in manuscript form, drawn from archives across the United Kingdom and Ireland, the majority have been published, either by the authors themselves, or by later editors, such as the corpus of archival sources that have been edited and published by the prolific Gareth Glover.<sup>30</sup> The sources under consideration are also weighted heavily towards officers who served during the Napoleonic period, and especially officers who fought during the Peninsular War and at Waterloo. In part, this is a result of the size of the army during different periods of the conflict. As highlighted previously, the officer corps was nearly five times larger during the last years of the Peninsular War than it was in 1792, which undoubtedly resulted in fewer letters, journals, and memoirs being produced regarding the earlier stages of the war. Additionally, officers who served during the Revolutionary Wars, or at least before the Egyptian Campaign of 1801, may not have felt that their stories provided sufficient fodder for memoirs. The British army's campaigns during the 1790s were expeditions to the continent that ended in defeat, or took place in the West Indies, where disease ravaged the army. In contrast, officers who fought in the Peninsula or at Waterloo could point to their place within a narrative that ended with the defeat of one of the great leaders of the age. Furthermore, as shown by Neil

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<sup>28</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 127-96.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Burnham, 'Appendix: British Memoirs of the Napoleonic Wars', in *Inside Wellington's Peninsular Army, 1808-1814*, ed. Robert Burnham, Ron McGuigan, Howie Muir & Rory Muir (Barnsley, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> For a full list of the primary sources edited and published by Gareth Glover, see [www.garethglover.com](http://www.garethglover.com) (05 Jan. 2017).

Ramsey, public interest in the Peninsular War was high, generating demand for memoirs of the conflict.<sup>31</sup>

In his overview of combatants' narratives of modern conflict, Samuel Hynes viewed soldiers' writings as belonging to a singular, overarching 'tale'.<sup>32</sup> Viewing soldiers' accounts in this manner effectively divorces soldiers' writings from the literary context in which they were produced. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a full analysis of the influences that shaped junior officers' writings; however, a consideration of these factors is necessary to outline the advantages and potential difficulties of the sources used for this thesis. Written soon after the events officers were describing, letters, diaries, and journals are the most immediate sources produced by junior officers. Proximity to the events they were describing does not ensure that officers' letters, in particular, were verbatim descriptions of all that had occurred since the author's last letter, or were entirely consistent in their style. Junior officers often remarked of the lack of interesting events they had to describe, resulting in a short letter which contained minimal detail. Other letters were fired off in the immediate aftermath of a battle, with a more detailed and reflective account being written in the days that followed. Some letters were constructed over a period of days, as officers found they had time while in camp to provide a lengthy description of recent events. In each of these types of letters, junior officers were engaged in a process of selection with regards to which events and thoughts they deemed worthy of conveying to their recipient, and were contributing to the collective memory of the wars by highlighting the author's place within important events.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, letters were written within a set of literary conventions. As revealed by Kennedy in her study of narrative during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, British officers' style of letter writing was stylised. Officers' letters were shaped by late-eighteenth century literary culture, with officers drawing on the languages of sensibility, Gothicism, and the sublime to describe their emotions and the events they witnessed.<sup>34</sup> Letter writing was central to maintain bonds of family and friendship over distance during the eighteenth century, as highlighted by junior officers' correspondence.<sup>35</sup> While some well-connected officers corresponded with government figures, the bulk of letters were written to close family members and friends. The content of letters varied, depending on the recipient. Letters written to mothers or siblings tended to include more emotional detail, while letters to fathers were more likely to have a

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<sup>31</sup> Ramsey, *The Military Memoir*, pp. 33-6.

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York, NY, 1997), pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>33</sup> Forrest, François, and Hagemann, 'Introduction', p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 13-21.

<sup>35</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (New York, NY, 2001), pp. 113-4.



focus on military events, promotion, and expenditure. Not all letters were private texts, intended for one recipient. Some letters were written with the intention that they would be read aloud or shared amongst a circle of family and friends, while others were published in the British press.<sup>36</sup> In itself, the literary style of officers' letters speaks to an important aspect of their identity, as it highlights junior officers' status as part of a wider reading culture, and of their aspirations to 'polite gentlemanliness'.<sup>37</sup> In addition to writing letters, many junior officers kept a diary or journal to record events as they occurred. Journal writing was also important in the styling of a polite identity, as the introspective practice of writing was believed to nurture self-improvement.<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant George Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars kept a journal throughout 1813, and even named his journal his 'Idle Companion'. Self-reflection was at the forefront of Woodberry's mind when he wrote, 'I don't know how to employ myself except with this, my idle companion. I have used myself so regularly to write in it daily that it is become a part of my daily duty & in fact don't feel comfortable till I have discharged it.'<sup>39</sup>

Memoirs present a slightly different set of challenges as sources. As published and public texts, memoirs are the most literary sources provided by officers. The early-mid nineteenth century was a boon period for military memoirs of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, as the British reading public became eager for tales from the recently completed wars.<sup>40</sup> In his literary study of British Romantic military memoirs, Neil Ramsey revealed how memoirs influenced Romantic visions of war, as they depicted war as a picturesque and heroic experience.<sup>41</sup> The literary composition of memoirs has been noted as an obstacle to their use by historians of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: in her study of wartime narratives, Kennedy chose to favour contemporary accounts and to use memoirs sparingly, owing to the different cultural climate in which memoirs were written.<sup>42</sup> Written after the events they recounted, the detail included in memoirs could be affected by the passage of time, and were written to reflect romantic literary tastes and styles. With judicious use, however, memoirs are valuable sources for the study of identity. There are numerous thematic similarities between contemporary sources and memoirs. Memoirs also reveal general impressions and generalisations, that speak to the author's aspirations, sensibilities, and expectations, and which are also suggestive as to the influences which held sway during formative experiences.

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<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>37</sup> On eighteenth-century reading culture, see John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), pp. 125-200.

<sup>38</sup> Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>39</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 20 Jun. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 146.

<sup>40</sup> Ramsey, *The Military Memoir*, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Ramsey, *The Military Memoir*, pp. 137-191.

<sup>42</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 8.

As noted previously, a feature of Romantic military memoirs was their celebration of the experiences of commons soldiers and low-ranking officers. The very titles of junior officers' memoirs reflect this. As highlighted at the start of this introduction, George Wood chose to name his memoir *The Subaltern Officer*, and was also a feature of George Gleig's 1826 memoir, *The Subaltern*.<sup>43</sup> As this thesis focuses on the experiences of junior officers, memoirs written by officers who attained field or general rank during their career present another challenge. Theoretically, memoirs written by high-ranking officers could suffer from a shifting perspective, and provide a 'top-down' view of officers' military careers. As nineteenth-century memoirs were liable to celebrate the experiences of low-ranking soldiers and officers, and viewed the entire military experience as one of self-discovery and formation, even memoirs written by general officers regularly described and reflected on their experiences as junior officers.<sup>44</sup> George Bell, for example, retired in the mid-nineteenth century as a major-general, and published his memoir in 1867. For all of his achievements, Bell chose to dedicate his memoir to subalterns, and began his account with a description of his leaving home to join his regiment as a new ensign.<sup>45</sup> With careful reading, therefore, even the memoirs of senior officers can shed light on the experiences of junior officers.

### ***Culture, Experience, and Identity***

'Identity' has become an important topic for historians of eighteenth-century Britain, and has been used to explore a range of topics, such as nationalism, gender, politics, and class.<sup>46</sup> This thesis uses the term 'identity' to describe a range of individual and collective modes of belonging. Junior officers' identities were formed internally and externally, as they found points of similarity and difference with a wide range of groups and individuals. Junior officers' allegiances were complex and multi-faceted, with significant overlap between identities. Dror Wahrman has argued that the late-eighteenth century saw the 'self' become prominent in the fashioning of identities, as opposed to the collective identities of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.<sup>47</sup> There are some features of junior officers' identities that reflect the growth of the cult of the self. Junior officers' yearning for promotion and their complaints about submission to the military hierarchy suggest that junior officers had a streak of individualism.

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<sup>43</sup> George Gleig, *The Subaltern* (Edinburgh, 1825).

<sup>44</sup> Harari, *The Ultimate Experience*, pp. 149-50.

<sup>45</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier, During Fifty Years' Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General C.B.* (London, 1867), p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> For example, see Colley, *Britons*; Wilson, *The Sense of the People*; Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>47</sup> Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT, 2004).

These individualistic aspects of junior officers' identities, however, were refracted through a broader set of collective identities. As noted by Kathleen Wilson, identities in eighteenth-century Britain were inherently bound to social orders and the practices of daily life.<sup>48</sup> To properly examine junior officers' identities, therefore, it is not only essential to explore how junior officers wrote about their own experiences, but to interpret their accounts through the lens of eighteenth-century British society and culture. Traditionally, cultural historians have focused on the representation of nationhood, gender, or class.<sup>49</sup> This thesis, however, is grounded in the lived experiences of junior officers, and explores how junior officers' daily practices and identities were shaped by the ideals of British culture.

This thesis draws on cultural histories of eighteenth-century Britain to interpret the experiences of junior officers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Ranking highly among these is the history of masculinity. As noted by Matthew McCormack, military historians have been reluctant to study masculinity within the military, owing to the assumption of 'masculine' attributes within the army, such as bravery and physical strength, while historians of masculinity have only recently begun to apply their methodologies to the military.<sup>50</sup> The history of masculinity is especially pertinent to the British officer corps, as different models of manhood allow us to interpret how junior officers related to each other, their superiors and inferiors, and to establish where military practice diverted from civilian mores. The eighteenth-century British officer corps was viewed by some contemporaries as adhering to a roguish and libertine masculinity, obsessed with womanising, drinking, and gambling, a view that has been adopted by some historians of the army.<sup>51</sup> British officers were prone to these behaviours; however, this was only one aspect of their character. With its emphasis on 'gentlemanliness' as a qualifying attribute, the British officer corps was deeply influenced by the values of 'politeness', the dominant measure of eighteenth-century British gentlemanliness. Recent scholarship has revealed that the sensibilities of Georgian officers reflected those of the 'polite gentleman', as officers took an interest in reading, travel, and dancing, amongst other cultural pursuits which were seen to compliment an officer's military character.<sup>52</sup> Displaying the manners and outlook

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<sup>48</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> For a critique of the methodologies of cultural history, see Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural & Social History*, 1 (2004), pp. 94-117.

<sup>50</sup> Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 2-3.

<sup>51</sup> Tim Fulford, 'Sighing for a Soldier: Jane Austen and Military Pride and Prejudice', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 57 (2002), pp. 153-78; Buckley, *The British Army*, pp. 339-41.

<sup>52</sup> For the links between politeness and the Georgian officer corps, see Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishment and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain', *Cultural & Social History*, 8 (2011), pp. 315-330; Gavin Daly, 'Liberators and Tourists: British Soldiers in Madrid during the Peninsular War', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland*, pp. 117-35; Ira Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010).

of a 'polite gentleman' was essential for ingratiating junior officers to their comrades; however, there were additional characteristics officers displayed. Georgian society made a virtue of 'independence' as a masculine trait, which conflicted with the strictures of the military hierarchy.<sup>53</sup> A culture of honour pervaded the officer corps. Honour is a nebulous concept which operated on several levels for British officers. Honour bound junior officers to their regiments and to nation. The honour code also informed how officers related to each other. Personal honour demanded that officers be tenacious of their gentlemanly reputation, sometimes to the point of fighting a duel with a comrade to prove their character. Junior officers also drew on the language of sensibility to describe the close bonds they formed with regimental comrades, those they maintained with family members at home, and their attitudes to the rank and file. These differing models of masculinity existed alongside and interacted with each other, with each shaping junior officers' identities in different contexts.

Junior officers joined the army with a range of existing values and expectations, which fused with more thoroughly military values, such as pan-European military professionalism and a belief in the honourable conduct of war. As a relatively contained institution, the army could be reasonably expected to have reduced the influence of civilian values over time, and shaped individuals' identities according to values found only within the army. Junior officers, however, did not abandon the values of Georgian society once they joined their regiments. Avid readers of newspapers and periodicals from Britain, and eager for news from home in letters, junior officers remained well-connected to the civilian world, ensuring that the influences of Georgian society remained throughout their service. These values were intrinsic to their military identities, as they provided a lens for officers to view their military experiences through, ensuring British junior officers were not solely products of the army. Junior officers, therefore, lived not only as soldiers, but as members of families, nations, and political communities. Through letters and by serving alongside family members, for example, junior officers attempted to maintain close family relationships, while they also looked to the family as a model for the ideal regiment.<sup>54</sup> As the army was 'British' in name and composition, with officers and soldiers drawn from across Britain and Ireland, the army provided a context for officers to reflect on the nature of the British nation and appropriate expressions of patriotism. Class is an especially important consideration with regards to British officers during this period. As officers were at once 'officers and gentlemen', a sharp social distinction existed between officers and the ranks. There were also distinctions between individual officers, who were drawn from across

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<sup>53</sup> For the significance of 'independence' in Georgian England, see Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005).

<sup>54</sup> For family life in Georgian Britain see Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT, 2009).

the landed and professional classes of Georgian Britain. In addition to these individual differences, the regimental system also encouraged a degree of social stratification. Entry into the elite Foot Guards or cavalry was more expensive than the line, and these regiments attracted wealthy or aristocratic officers. Furthermore, these officers were often well-connected, and used these connections in attempts to gain promotion or staff appointments. Often possessed of additional income from a family member, the experiences of these officers were materially different from officers of the line. For their part, line officers could develop resentment towards these regiments and their officers, and viewed their wealth and monopolisation of patronage through the prism of eighteenth-century classical republican discourses, which attacked elites for their corruption and lack of virtue.<sup>55</sup>

### ***Men in the Middle***

In addition to the values officers brought from civilian society, junior officers' identities were deeply influenced by their middling status within the military hierarchy. The hierarchy of the Georgian army has been most thoroughly explored with regards to the rank and file. Traditionally, studies of the relationship between the officer corps and common soldiers have argued for the powerlessness of rankers in the face of coercive military justice and capital punishment.<sup>56</sup> A recent study by William P. Tatum, however, has significantly revised this view, and revealed the varying forms of protest open to British soldiers during the eighteenth-century, which included the potential for a reciprocal relationship of 'negotiated authority' between rankers and officers.<sup>57</sup> Given the social distinction that existed between officers and rankers, the focus on the experiences of rankers within the military hierarchy is somewhat understandable. This thesis aims to complement existing knowledge of the British military hierarchy by providing a view from the middle of the British army.

The British officer corps was socially diverse, especially at the junior levels, and drew in men from across the aristocracy, landed gentry, and professional classes.<sup>58</sup> With the exception of officers who had been promoted from the ranks, junior officers were still socially remote from

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<sup>55</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 143-56.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth-Century British Army', *Armed Forces and Society*, 6 (1980), pp. 553-67; Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 123-53.

<sup>57</sup> William P. Tatum, "'The Soldiers Murmured Much on Account of this Usage': Military Justice and Negotiated Authority in the Eighteenth-Century British Army', in *Britain's Soldiers*, pp. 95-113.

<sup>58</sup> For social origins of officers in the eighteenth century army, see Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 104. For the Peninsular War, Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 7-8.

the rank and file, who were drawn largely from labouring classes.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, officers of all ranks shared the sensibilities and tastes of 'polite gentlemen', providing the officer corps with a cultural unity and another point of differentiation from the ranks. Buttressed by the authority of class distinction, British junior officers were endowed with significant direct and moral authority over the rank and file. *The Regimental Companion*, a military guidebook outlining the duties of army officers, stressed the importance of subalterns to the functioning of a regiment, 'The conduct of every subaltern officer in a regiment is of the last importance to service. The interior oeconomy of a corps rests almost wholly upon his attention, zeal, and vigilance.'<sup>60</sup> Influenced by Enlightenment ideals, the eighteenth-century British military was obsessed with the cleanliness and order of its soldiers and sailors, as a part of what Erica Charters has described as the 'caring fiscal-military state.'<sup>61</sup> Subalterns' duties reflected these values: they were responsible for inspecting the cleanliness of soldiers' barracks, bedding, kitchens, and cooking utensils; for ensuring that all men were in bed at lights out; and for reporting illnesses and irregularities within the ranks.<sup>62</sup>

There was, however, another side to the position of junior officers. As occupants of the lowest ranks of the officer corps, junior officers were themselves subject to the strictures of military authority. The hierarchy of a regiment could be calculated down to the day. The *Army List* was an annually published list of every officer in the regular army that contained the date on which an officer obtained his present rank within the army, as well as the date from which he had served with the regiment.<sup>63</sup> With the majority of promotions awarded via seniority, with all officers moving one step higher each time a vacancy occurred higher up the chain, status within the hierarchy had important ramifications for an officer's career.<sup>64</sup> Despite retaining more individual licence than the rank and file, there was still much in a junior officers' life he could not control: uniforms were set, while daily routines were subsumed by the needs of the regiment. In terms of campaign experience, junior officers could share more in common with the rank and file than superior officers. This is especially true of line regiments, where officers tended to be of lesser means and social standing. To push the idea of the 'middle' further, new subalterns also occupied the middle space between civilian and military society, and the fault

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<sup>59</sup> For the social background of rankers during the Peninsular War, see Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 67-72.

<sup>60</sup> Charles James, *The Regimental Companion: Containing the Relative Duties of Every Officer in the British Army*, Vol. I (London, 1800), p. 100.

<sup>61</sup> Erica Charters, 'The Caring Fiscal-Military State during the Seven Years War, 1756-1763', *Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 921-41.

<sup>62</sup> James, *The Regimental Companion*, pp. 92-4.

<sup>63</sup> This thesis draws on data from the *Army List* between 1780, the earliest date of commission for an officer in this study, and 1877, when the last officer in this study died: The National Archives, London (hereafter, TNA) WO 65/39-162.

<sup>64</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', pp.223-35.

line between youth and adulthood. As some of the youngest and newest members of the officer corps, the experiences of these officers highlight the intersection between the civilian and military world, and reveal the tensions between the practices in both spheres. The junior ranks of the officer corps had a youthful complexion, with the officers in this study having an average age of nineteen years when they were commissioned. Therefore, newly commissioned officers were not only making the transition from 'civilian' to 'soldier', but also from youth to manhood.

Taken together, these factors combined to ensure that junior officers developed an identity *as* junior officers. This identity stemmed more directly from the subordination junior officers experienced, than the authority they wielded. Across the social, national, and regimental spectrum, junior officers shared much in terms of their outlook on the military and their place within it. This is not to suggest that this was junior officers' primary identity, or that they routinely identified with each other on the basis of their common experiences. Other modes of belonging, such as class, regiment, or family provided strong points of reference for junior officers. Identifying as a junior officer; however, shaped how officers interpreted their experiences in the army, as their middling status provided a swathe of competing demands, and conflicts of identity. These identities were not fixed, or mutually exclusive, as junior officers variously identified with a range of individuals and collectives. This thesis explores these tensions across a range of contexts, which highlight the complexity of junior officers' worldview.

Chapter One is a sociological overview of the officers included in this thesis, and provides contextual information for the subsequent chapters. Chapter Two centres on politeness, and highlights how identifying as a 'polite gentleman' was essential for integrating into the army, and also identifies some of the limitations of using politeness as a model for understanding junior officers' conduct. Chapter Three examines the idea of 'professional identity', by exploring junior officers' professional aspirations and how they believed these were best fulfilled. Chapter Four explores collective belonging and the intersection between the civilian and military worlds, by focusing on the bonds within regiments, families, and friendship groups. Chapter Five focuses on honour culture in the officer corps, and how and why junior officers fought duels with their comrades. Chapter Six is a survey of how junior officers thought about their role as leaders, and of their relationship with the rank and file. The final chapter, Chapter Seven, looks at the relationship between military service and national identity, and considers how junior officers' patriotic identities evolved over the course of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. The tensions that existed within junior officers' identities suggests that theirs was a unique place within the British army of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and highlights how the hierarchy of the British army was more complex than the often highlighted social divide between officers and the common soldier.

## Chapter One: Sociological Analysis

The period between 1793 and 1815 saw Britain almost continually at war with France, the final chapter in what has been considered the 'Second Hundred Years War' and, more recently, the 'Seventy Years War' by Anthony Page.<sup>1</sup> This sustained period of warfare saw the regular British army, traditionally small by European standards, grow to a record size as it was deployed in a range of theatres to combat the armies of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. A relatively modest 42, 000 strong in 1793, the British army grew to a size of 250, 000 men at its peak in 1812, with an average of three to four per cent of the British population serving in the regular army during the wars.<sup>2</sup> This degree of mobilisation necessitated an increase in the size of the officer corps, which swelled from 3, 107 officers in 1792, to a high point of just under 11, 000 effective officers in 1812.<sup>3</sup> While these rates of mobilisation still paled in comparison to continental nations – in early-1793 alone the French republic added 300, 000 troops to the Revolutionary army – expanding the army to such a size was unparalleled in British history.<sup>4</sup> The increased size of the army and the experience of war impacted the administration of the army and officer corps, while also altering the officer corps' social and cultural fabric. When compared to the drastic reorganisation of the French army and officer corps occasioned by the Revolution, the rate and scale of change within the British officer corps was less dramatic. As shown by John A. Lynn, the French abolition of aristocratic privilege and the political demands of the Revolutionary government transformed the French officer corps, with promotion from the ranks becoming commonplace.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, the British officer corps during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars retained many of its eighteenth-century characteristics. Various studies have explored the administration and composition of the eighteenth-century British officer corps and how the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars impacted this institution. In a study of the training of the eighteenth-century British army, J.A. Houlding examined the social composition of the officer

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<sup>1</sup> François Crouzet, 'The Second Hundred Years War: Some Reflections', *French History*, 10 (1996), pp. 432-450; Anthony Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years War, 1744-1815: Enlightenment, Revolution and Empire* (Basingstoke, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society, and Tradition, 1807-15* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 32; Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years War*, p. 115; David Gates, 'The Transformation of the Army, 1783-1815', in *The Oxford History of the British Army*, ed. Ian Beckett and David G. Chandler (Oxford, 1994), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Glover, *Wellington's Army in the Peninsula, 1808-1814* (New York, NY, 1977), p. 36; T.H. McGuffie, 'Bibliographical Aids to Research: XIV – The Significance of Military Rank in the British Army between 1790 and 1820', *Historical Research*, 30 (1957), p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen-Soldiers to Instruments of Power* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Boulder, CO, 1996), pp. 67-9.



corps up until 1795.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, P.E. Razzell compared the social origins of officers of the Indian and British home army between 1758 and 1962, and revealed that warfare had the long-term effect of diluting the social standing of army officers.<sup>7</sup> With regards to the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, scholarly attention has been focused on administrative reforms, the social make-up of the Peninsular officer corps, and how officers acquired their commissions. Richard Glover surveyed the reformation of the British army following the failed 1793-1795 campaign in the Low Countries, an integral component of which was an overhaul of the system of commissions and promotions.<sup>8</sup> Our understanding of the officer corps during the period of the Peninsular War is extensive, largely owing to Michael Glover's studies of officers' commissions and promotions during this period, as well as their social origins.<sup>9</sup> The findings of this chapter are not intended as a definitive survey of the junior ranks of the British officer corps; a task which could constitute a separate study. While the detail of this chapter contributes to our knowledge of the late-Georgian officer corps, it would be misleading to suggest that this chapter is wholly representative of the social make-up and career progression of junior officers. This chapter, rather, is a sociological analysis of the seventy-seven officers whose testimonies have been drawn on for this thesis, and contextualises this cohort of officers within the broader sociological studies of the army. It aims to explain, therefore, who the officers included in this study were, and how their wartime careers compared with our established knowledge of the British officer corps during the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

### ***Social and National Backgrounds***

The eighteenth-century British officer corps was a socially and nationally diverse institution, despite the presence and cultural strength of officers from the aristocracy and landed gentry. This diversity is reflected in the social backgrounds of the seventy-seven officers included in this study. As highlighted by Roger Norman Buckley and John Cookson, the eighteenth-century officer corps reflected the values of the land-owning classes.<sup>10</sup> Unlike some continental eighteenth-century armies, however, the British army did not place social restrictions on the officer corps, ensuring that the aristocratic domination seen in some continental armies was

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<sup>6</sup> J.A. Houlding, *Fit For Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 99-115.

<sup>7</sup> P.E. Razzell, 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army: 1758-1962', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 14 (1963), pp. 248-60.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1980), pp. 232-4.

<sup>9</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Norman Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies* (Gainesville, FL, 1998), pp. 206-9; John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 23-42.

unlikely to be replicated in Britain.<sup>11</sup> The purchase system did not preclude officers from outside the aristocracy or wealthy gentry from becoming officers, but it reduced their chances of achieving field or general rank. The nobility and landed gentry comprised over half of all general officers and full colonels during the eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The social pool was wider at the regimental level. In his study of the eighteenth-century army, J.A. Houlding described the British officer corps as a 'social mélange', and placed regimental officers into four main social categories. Houlding calculated that the vast majority of regimental officers came from small gentry, professional, and farming families; one-quarter from the sons of aristocratic or upper gentry families; a small proportion of men from professional 'army families', including foreigners; and men promoted from the ranks. This last group, argued Houlding, was larger than normally supposed.<sup>13</sup> What unified these men from disparate social backgrounds, with the exception of men promoted from the ranks, was a social outlook and educational grounding which defined them as gentlemen.<sup>14</sup>

The manpower demands created by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars broadened the social base of the officer corps. The officer corps grew from 3, 107 officers in 1792, to just under 11, 000 on full pay in 1812, with an annual demand for 1, 000 new officers during the Peninsular War.<sup>15</sup> Indicative of how these pressures drew men from outside the aristocracy and landed gentry into the army is that this increase was not accompanied by an increase in the number of officers from noble families. As revealed by Robert Burnham and Ron McGuigan, the number of officers of noble birth remained relatively stable between 1805 and 1815, with 198 nobles or sons of nobles serving in 1805, 227 in 1812, and 206 in 1815.<sup>16</sup> The stability in numbers of elite officers suggests that the families of the 450 British and Irish peers could only contribute so many men to the army, and ensured that the proportion of officers from titled backgrounds could only decline as the officer corps expanded, a known long-term effect of warfare on the British officer corps.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, warfare reduced the proportion of first commissions and promotions which were had by purchase, particularly in line regiments, opening up opportunities to officers of lesser means.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the Napoleonic Wars,

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<sup>11</sup> H.M. Scott and Christopher Storrs, 'The Military Revolution and the European Nobility, c. 1600-1800', *War in History*, 3 (1996), pp. 15-6.

<sup>12</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 104-6.

<sup>13</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 36; McGuffie, 'The Significance of Military Rank', p. 217; Razzell, 'Social Origins', pp. 248-60.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Burnham and Ron McGuigan, *The British Army Against Napoleon: Facts, Lists, and Trivia, 1805-1815* (Barnsley, 2010), pp. 16-7.

<sup>17</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', pp. 232-4.

therefore, the officer corps as a whole was a social patchwork: aristocrats and the landed gentry served in the same institution as men from the lesser gentry, the sons of professional men, and men from the ranks, who comprised five per cent of all officers.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 1.1 Social Backgrounds**

	Number	%
<b>Aristocracy</b>	4	5.2
<b>Gentry</b>	18	23.4
<b>Professional</b>	23	29.9
<b>From Ranks</b>	3	3.9
<b>Unknown</b>	29	37.8

Data compiled from personal accounts, editor's notes, and secondary biographical sources.

Identifying the social background of the seventy-seven officers considered by this thesis is difficult owing to the limited available biographical information regarding several of the officers, with the only available evidence of their social background being their personal accounts. These are often fragmentary or lacking in biographical detail. This is especially true of officers whose accounts exist only in manuscript form. It is evident from the available data regarding forty-eight officers included in this study, however, that this cohort reflects the social diversity of the officer corps during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Figure 1.1 highlights the social breakdown of these forty-eight officers, which included men from the peerage; large and small gentry families; professional families; and men from the ranks. The easiest group to identify within this cohort are officers of aristocratic background. Four officers in this study were from aristocratic families, comprising five per cent of the total. Even within this small sample there were differing backgrounds. Edward Charles Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons served as a member of the House of Commons between 1807 and 1809, while Alexander Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars was the illegitimate child of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Aberdeen.<sup>20</sup> Below these illustrious officers were officers who came from land-owning families. The landed gentry had traditional ties to the military, and had provided one-quarter of all army officers during the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Eighteen, or just over twenty-three per cent, of the officers in this study came from land-owning backgrounds. The amount of land owned by these families, and the wealth at their disposal, is likely to have varied. John Mills, the son of an MP, and John Aitchison and Charles Kinloch, both the sons of Scottish lairds, could call on their families to supplement their income with

<sup>19</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 37-8.

<sup>20</sup> Julia V. Page ed., *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812* (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), pp. 13-7; H.C. Wylly ed., *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign, 1808-1809: The Journal of Captain Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars* (London, 1913), p. xi.

<sup>21</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 104-5.

allowances of over £100 per year.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, John Blakiston appears to have come from a small land-owning family, as his family purchased his commission for him, but offered little support thereafter, while Peter Bowlby was sent into the army after his father sold the family estate.<sup>23</sup> This group includes two officers from the Irish Protestant gentry, Robert Blakeney and George Bell.<sup>24</sup>

The largest group of officers in this study with identifiable social backgrounds are officers from what can be termed 'professional' backgrounds. There are twenty-three officers from this group in this thesis, comprising just over one-quarter of the total officers. The families that these officers came from varied markedly in terms of wealth and stature. At one end, there were officers from relatively wealthy families. John Lucie Blackman, for example, was the son of a governor of the Bank of England, who could afford to send Blackman into the Coldstream Guards, while providing an additional income.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, John Fremantle, also of the Coldstream Guards, came from a family of merchants, and was the son of a successful army officer and member of the Irish parliament.<sup>26</sup> Others came from respectable, if less salubrious origins. Harry Smith of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles was the son of a surgeon, while George Simmons, also of the 95<sup>th</sup>, was a surgeon by trade before obtaining his commission.<sup>27</sup> William Thornton Keep was the son of a War Officer bureaucrat, while Thomas Henry Browne and George Hennell the sons of manufacturers.<sup>28</sup> This group also includes officers from military families. George Wood, Thomas Staunton St. Clair, and John Le Couteur, were all the sons of army officers, while Thomas Phipps Howard initially entered the British army as a mercenary with the largely

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<sup>22</sup> Ian Fletcher ed., *In the Service of the King: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-14* (Spellmount, 1995), pp. 11-2; W.F.K. Thompson ed., *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison* (London, 1981), p. 1; Gareth Glover ed., *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry, 1806-16* (Huntingdon, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> John Blakiston, *Twelve Years Military Adventure in Three-Quarters of the Globe*, Vol. I (London, 1829), p. 2; National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Peter Bowlby', pp. 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by and Old Soldier during Fifty Years' Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General C.B.* (London, 1807), p. 1; Julian Sturgis ed., *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (London, 1899), p. xii.

<sup>25</sup> Gareth Glover ed., *'It all Culminated at Hougoumont': The Letters of Captain John Lucie Blackman, Coldstream Guards, 1812-15* (Huntingdon, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Gareth Glover ed., *Wellington's Voice: The Candid Letters of Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle, Coldstream Guards 1808-1837* (Barnsley, 2012), pp. 28, 34.

<sup>27</sup> G.C. Moore ed., *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Harry Smith: Baronet of the Aliwal on the Sutlej* (London, 1901), pp. 1-2; Willoughby Verner ed., *A British Rifle Man: The Journals and Correspondence of Major George Simmons, Rifle Brigade, during the Peninsular War and the Campaign of Waterloo* (London, 1986), p. xii.

<sup>28</sup> Ian Fletcher ed., *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsula, 1808-1814*, (Staplehurst, 1997), p. 3; Roger Norman Buckley ed., *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne: 1807-1816* (London, 197), p. 2; Michael Glover ed., *A Gentleman Volunteer: Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812-1813* (London, 1979), p. 1.

foreign-raised York Hussars, suggesting that he was a career officer.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Peter Jennings, the sole Irish Catholic officer in this thesis, came from a family of military professionals who served the French monarchy before the Revolution, a tradition which Jennings was a part of.<sup>30</sup>

There are three officers in this study who were promoted from the ranks. Only one of these officers, William Surtees, provided information about his social and educational background in his account. Surtees stated that his parents: 'may be said to have been among the middle classes, my father being a tradesman. They gave me such an education as was customary with people of their station in life; viz. reading, writing and arithmetic.'<sup>31</sup> Surtees, therefore, was of slightly higher social standing than other rankers. As highlighted by Arthur Gilbert and Edward Coss, the majority of the rank and file in the eighteenth-century and Peninsular armies were drawn from labouring classes.<sup>32</sup> Given the requirement that non-commissioned officers be literate, it is possible that the two other officers in this study who were promoted from the ranks, William Gavin and David Wainwright, came from a similar background to Surtees, or at least had a rudimentary education. Finally, there are the twenty-nine officers in this study whose social backgrounds cannot be determined with certainty. The fragmentary biographical detail available for these officers suggests that this group were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. Lieutenant George James Sullivan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, for example, left little information about his family background in his unpublished memoir; however, he managed to purchase a commission and subsequent promotions in some of the army's most expensive regiments, suggesting that he was from a family of some means. Others, such as Edward Teasdale, cited their need to economise in their letters, suggesting they were of more straitened means.

While the officers in this study were drawn from diverse social backgrounds, this picture of social mixing is diminished by the social distinctions which existed between regiments. Regiments synonymous with social standing and wealth, such as the three regiments of Foot Guards and the twenty-seven of cavalry, were favoured by elite officers: of the 140 aristocratic regimental officers serving in 1809, seventy-nine held commissions in these regiments, with the

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<sup>29</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), p. 2; Thomas Staunton St. Clair, *A Soldier's Recollections of the West Indies and America: With a Narrative of the Expedition to the Island of Walcheren*, Vol. I (London, 1834), pp. 1-2; Donl E. Graves ed., *Merry Hearts Make Light Days: The War of 1812 Journal of Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 104<sup>th</sup> Foot* (Ottawa, 1993), p. 6; Roger Norman Buckley ed., *The Haitian Journal of Lieutenant Howard, York Hussars, 1796-1798* (Knoxville, TN, 1985), pp. xxxix, xlix-l.

<sup>30</sup> NAM 1983-01-102 Peter R. Jennings, 'Diary of Peter R. Jennings'.

<sup>31</sup> William Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years in the Rifle Brigade* (London, 1833), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> For the social composition of the rank and file during the eighteenth-century and during the Napoleonic period, see Arthur Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth-Century Army Recruiting Records', *Journal of Army Historical Research*, 54 (1976), pp. 38-47; Edward J. Coss, *All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Norman, OK, 2010), pp. 67-72.

remainder scattered between various line regiments.<sup>33</sup> Nearly half of all first commissions in the Guards and cavalry were purchased, to a cost of as much as £900 in the Foot Guards, and £1600 in the Life Guards cavalry regiment.<sup>34</sup> The four aristocratic officers in this study served with these prestigious regiments: two with the Foot Guards, and two with the cavalry. Similarly, wealthy members of the landed gentry or professional classes flocked to these regiments. Aitchison, Bragge, and Mills all served with the Guards or cavalry. Officers from wealthy professional families could also find their way into these regiments, highlighting how money could facilitate social blending. As noted previously, Blackman and Fremantle, who were both from professional backgrounds, served with the Coldstream Guards. Other officers from professional backgrounds could serve with the aristocratically inclined Guards and Cavalry. William Warre, the son of a British wine merchant based in Portugal, found his way into the cavalry and onto the staff.<sup>35</sup>

It was in line regiments where the officers from the lesser gentry and professional families included in this study proliferated. There were fewer social barriers to entering line regiments. Only seventeen per cent of commissions in the line were had by purchase, while the cost of a commission was cheaper at £400.<sup>36</sup> Of the forty-eight line officers included in this study, none were from the aristocracy. The sons of wealthy land-owners could be found in line regiments; yet only one line officer in this study, Kinloch, who served with the fashionable 52<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry, was identifiably from a wealthy gentry family. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the degree of social mixing in line regiments was higher than in the Guards or cavalry. In a letter to his mother, Ensign William Thornton Keep described the diverse backgrounds of his comrades in the 77<sup>th</sup> Foot, who ranged from the son of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, to the son of a naval captain; another was a Quaker of a 'violent and gay disposition' who bordered on a fop; another an impoverished, thirty-five year-old Scottish ensign, and Bradshaw: 'a very accomplished scholar and of a literary turn, and is well connected and rich, but derives his parentage I suspect on the maternal side from a Hindoo.'<sup>37</sup> Further highlighting the social mix within line regiments is the presence of officers who had been commissioned from the ranks. All three of the officers in this study who were commissioned from the ranks went into the line. This was consistent with the pattern of commissions for rankers identified by Glover, who

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<sup>33</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 233; Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 140.

<sup>35</sup> Edmond Warre ed., *Letters from the Peninsula, 1808-1812*, (Memphis, TN, 2012 [1909]), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commission', p. 233; Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 140.

<sup>37</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Nov. 1808, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 20.

found no examples of rankers being commissioned to regiments other than the line in a sample of commissions from the Peninsular War period.<sup>38</sup>

Several officers in this study had connections to the military through traditions of family military service, through a military education, or through service with Britain's auxiliary forces. Six officers in this study definitively had fathers who were, or had been, regular army officers; one was the son of a naval officer; and two who were the nephews of lieutenant-colonels. Three officers, Orlando Bridgeman, the son of the Earl of Bradford, Fremantle, and Le Couteur, passed through the Royal Military College (RMC), which was established at Great Marlow in 1802.<sup>39</sup> The low numbers of officers who received training at the RMC is reflective of the overall low number of officers who attended the college. With no formal training required of officers before they joined their regiments, only four per cent of all army officers in the Peninsular had attended the RMC.<sup>40</sup> The RMC was structured so as to prefer young men with familial or social connections to the military. Select sons of officers who had died or been disabled during military service could attend the college for free, with the sons of serving officers paying annual fees of £40, compared with the standard fee of £90 per year.<sup>41</sup> This preference for sons from military families is reflected in the officers in this study who attended the RMC: Le Couteur was the son of a serving lieutenant general during the Napoleonic Wars, while Fremantle was the son of a deceased colonel. Eight officers in this study joined the technical branches of the army, and served with the Royal Artillery or Royal Engineers. These officers were of mixed social standing. Charles Dansey was from a relatively wealthy gentry family, while William Webber was from a respectable, if not wealthy, land-owning background. Since the 1741 establishment of the military academy at Woolwich, artillery and engineering officers had been required to undergo training before being appointed to a commission.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, there were officers who had served with Britain's auxiliary forces. By the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, Britain had established the practice of recruiting part-time forces for home defence, a practice described by Ian Beckett in *The Amateur Military Tradition*.<sup>43</sup> As a response to the threat of France, Britain called up the militia in 1792, while local volunteer forces were raised from 1794.<sup>44</sup> These forces were numerous. Cookson calculated that at any given point there could be 129 regiments of regular militia, 199 of local militia, along with a

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage, and Promotion in the Army at the Time of the Peninsular War', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, 2-3 (1973), p. 212.

<sup>39</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 39.

<sup>40</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 141-2.

<sup>43</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester, 1991).

<sup>44</sup> Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition*, pp. 73-5.

peak of 2, 000 volunteer corps in 1804.<sup>45</sup> The line between these auxiliary forces and the regular army blurred, as the government used the militia as a recruiting ground for the regulars, by drafting rank and file from the militia into the regulars and by allowing militia officers to obtain a commission in the regulars by recruiting forty rankers from their militia regiments.<sup>46</sup> Ten officers in this study, all from line regiments, held commissions in the militia prior to joining the regulars, with four of these 'recruiting for rank'. Two officers served with fencible units, one with a volunteer regiment, and one with a yeomanry regiment of cavalry.

While social backgrounds can be difficult to discern, national backgrounds are easier to glean from officer accounts. The army which fought during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was a truly 'British' institution. The demands of warfare during the eighteenth century saw men from all parts of Britain and Ireland incorporated into the ranks and officer corps, to the point that fewer than one-quarter of officers who served in America during the Seven Years' War were English.<sup>47</sup> In particular, Scots came to be over-represented in the officer corps: during the American War of Independence, twenty-seven per cent of all officers were Scottish, despite Scots only comprising twelve per cent of the British population.<sup>48</sup> The proportion of Scottish officers remained steady into the Napoleonic Wars, where one-quarter of all officers were Scottish.<sup>49</sup> The officers in this study came from all across Britain and Ireland. As shown in Figure 1.2, English officers made up the bulk of officers in this study, with thirty-nine, or just over half, being English. The next largest national group are the Scottish, with eleven Scots comprising just over fourteen per cent of the officers in this study, including one officer from a Highland family. There are five Protestant Irish officers in this study, who comprise over six per cent of the whole, two Welsh officers, one Irish Catholic officer, and eight whose nationality cannot be determined. While Irish soldiers, Protestant and Catholic, comprised one-third of the army in 1813, Irish Catholic officers were rare, as they were prevented from holding commissions outside of Ireland before 1817.<sup>50</sup> In terms of nationality, then, the officers in this study do not reflect the national breakdown of the overall British officer corps during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. There is enough diversity within the selected officers, however, to ensure that the views of different nationalities are considered throughout this thesis.

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<sup>45</sup> John Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, pp. 35-55.

<sup>47</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 87.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83', in *A Military History of Scotland*, ed. Jeremy Crang, Edward Spiers & Matthew Strickland (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 389-90.

<sup>49</sup> Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, p. 127.

<sup>50</sup> Catriona Kennedy, '"True Brittons and Real Irish": Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, ed. Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 38-42.



**Figure 1.2 National Backgrounds**

	Number	%
<b>English</b>	39	50.6
<b>Scottish</b>	11	14.3
<b>Welsh</b>	2	2.6
<b>Irish Protestant</b>	5	6.5
<b>Irish Catholic</b>	1	1.3
<b>Unknown</b>	8	10.4

Data compiled from personal accounts, editors' notes, and secondary biographical sources.

Similar to officers' social backgrounds, calculating the age of officers when they were commissioned is reliant on fragmentary evidence. Overall, the British officer corps of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars had a youthful complexion. Before 1803, twenty per cent of new officers were under fifteen years of age, and after 1803, half were under eighteen, with sixteen being the most common age.<sup>51</sup> There is data available for the ages of forty of the officers included in this thesis. As shown in Figure 1.3, the officers in this study were overwhelmingly young when commissioned. The average age of officers in this study at the time of their commission was nineteen years old. Seventeen years was the most common age of officers in this study, with eleven officers that age at their commission. The bulk of officers in this study, nearly forty per cent, fell into the age range of between sixteen and twenty-five years old at their commission. Regulations stipulated that all new officers must be at least sixteen years before being commissioned; however, the flurry of commissions that were sold during the earliest years of the Revolutionary Wars were sold to men well under the regulation age.<sup>52</sup> One of these was John Blakiston, the youngest officer in this study at his commission, who became a 'schoolboy in uniform' in 1794 at only nine years of age, before being placed on half-pay as a consequence of the Duke of York's reforms targeting abuses of the purchase system.<sup>53</sup> The regulations appear to have been loosely followed with regards to the officers in this study, with another four officers commissioned at fifteen years old. The oldest officer in this study was William Gavin, who was commissioned from the ranks at the age of thirty-six, and is one of three officers commissioned in their thirties. Officers commissioned from the ranks tended to be older than their comrades when commissioned. In addition to Gavin, William Surtees was aged twenty-six when he was promoted to quartermaster of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles. Older officers are likely to

<sup>51</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 148.

<sup>53</sup> John Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three-Quarters of the Globe*, Vol. I (London, 1829), pp. 3-4.

have been conspicuous when commissioned. Robert Bakewell, for example, was thirty-four years old when his father purchased him a commission in the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot. If the most senior ensign in the 27<sup>th</sup> when Bakewell joined, Michael White, was nineteen when he was commissioned in 1807, then there would still have been an age difference of at least eleven years between the two when Bakewell joined.

**Figure 1.3 Ages at Commission**

Age Range	Number	%
6-15	5	6.5
16-25	30	39
26-35	4	5.2
36+	1	1.3
Unknown	37	48

Data compiled from personal accounts, editors' notes, and secondary biographical sources.

### *Commissions*

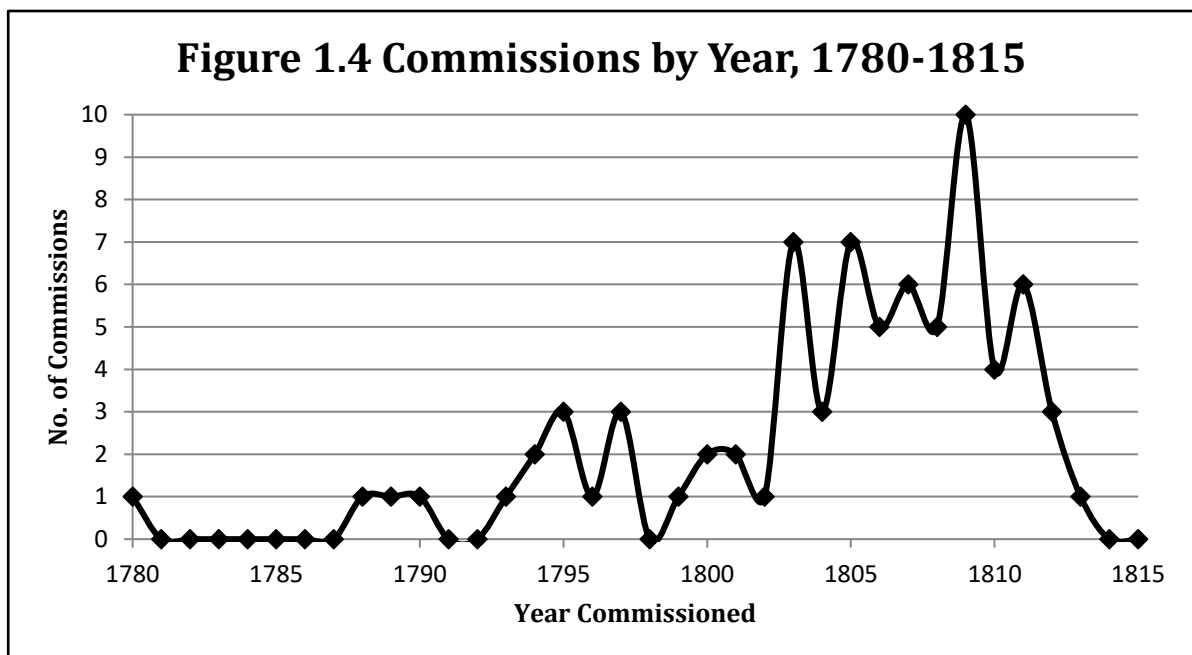
The first officer in this study to be commissioned was William Harness, who joined the 65<sup>th</sup> Foot in February 1780. The last to be commissioned was John W. Dunbar-Moodie, who joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Foot in February 1813. Generally, the officers in this study may be said to have joined the army as a response to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, with only four officers holding their commissions prior to the break-out of war with Revolutionary France in 1793. As Figure 1.4 demonstrates, the officers in this study entered the army spasmodically between 1788 and 1802, before a period of relatively consistent enlistment between 1803 and 1813. This pattern follows the expansion and contraction of the army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In 1792, there were 3, 107 officers on full pay, a number which swelled as new regiments were created on the outbreak of war in 1793.<sup>54</sup> This growth is reflected in the small spike in commissions obtained in the years 1794 and 1795. The low number of commissions per year until 1803 reflects the low overall intake into the army between 1796 and 1803, as recruitment efforts stalled and the government focused attention on auxiliary forces for home defence.<sup>55</sup> As the 1802 Peace of Amiens gave way to renewed war in May 1803, the army ballooned in size again, growing from 52, 000 in March 1803, to 94, 000 strong in January 1804.<sup>56</sup> From this period until 1813, the army and officer corps grew in size: in 1807, there were 8, 600 officers on

<sup>54</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 227.

<sup>55</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> Roger Knight, *Britain against Napoleon: The Organisation of Victory, 1793-1815* (London, 2013), pp. 259-60.

full-pay, excluding the artillery and engineers, before the officer corps peaked at 10,590 officers in 1814.<sup>57</sup> The largest intake of officers in this study occurred in 1809, when ten officers were commissioned. This occurred as the Peninsular War began to demand more manpower for the British army. As well as creating the demand for new officers to lead an expanding army, the Peninsular War also brought about a heavy loss of officers, with approximately 1,000 new officers required each year.<sup>58</sup> This period of consistent enlistment was brought to a halt in 1814, the first year since 1798 when no officers in this study were commissioned; as Napoleon's first exile saw the British reduce the size of their army, diminishing the demand for new officers.



Commission dates compiled from TNA WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

As shown in Figure 1.5, these men were commissioned into the four main branches of the regular British army. Of the seventy-seven officers whose accounts have been used in this study, forty-seven joined line infantry regiments, thirteen joined cavalry regiments, nine joined the Foot Guards, and eight went into the technical branches as artillery or engineering officers. While officers could, and occasionally did, switch between regiments, the officers in this study generally finished their careers in the same branch in which they started. The three exceptions to this rule are Lieutenant George Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, who purchased his way into this cavalry regiment from the 10<sup>th</sup> Foot, Captain William Warre, who served with dragoon regiments and on the staff in the Peninsula, and Captain Charles Pasley, who transferred to the Royal Engineers from the Royal Artillery in 1799. The number of line infantry officers in the army dwarfed the number of officers from the Foot Guards and the cavalry. For the duration of

<sup>57</sup> McGuffie, 'The Significance of Military Rank', p. 215; Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 36.

the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, there were only three Foot Guards regiments, while the number of cavalry regiments remained stable at twenty-seven between 1805 and June 1815.<sup>59</sup> In contrast, in 1805 there were 100 line regiments, not including colonial units, such as the West India Regiments or New South Wales Corps.<sup>60</sup> As this study examines differences between officers from all branches of the army and attempts to establish the differences and similarities in cultures between these branches, it is inevitable that officers from the Guards and cavalry will be over-represented when compared to their numbers within the army.

**Figure 1.5 Commissions by Branch**

Branch	Number	%
Guards	9	11.7
Cavalry	13	16.9
Line	47	61
Artillery/Engineers	8	10.4
Total	77	-

Commission data compiled from TNA WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

When it came to obtaining a commission and achieving promotion for the eighteenth-century British army officer, opportunity was not equal. Patronage and wealth could count for much, values which were enshrined in the methods used for obtaining commissions. A degree of patronage was required before an officer could gain a commission, with a personal recommendation from an officer of field rank or higher the only requirement for a prospective officer, apart from literacy and age requirements.<sup>61</sup> The importance of wealth to the system of commissions and promotions was highlighted by the legitimate practice of buying and selling commissions and promotions, a system which was not abolished in the British army until 1871. As revealed by Anthony Bruce, the practice of purchasing military positions had roots in the medieval period, before being consolidated after the establishment of a standing British army in 1660, and brought under closer government control during the early-mid-eighteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Aside from acting as a social filter, the purchase system had several practical and theoretical benefits. As a saleable piece of property, the sale of commissions allowed the government to avoid the expense of providing pensions for all of their former officers, while the possibility of

<sup>59</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 60-9.

<sup>60</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>61</sup> Charles James, *The Regimental Companion: Containing the Relative Duties of Every Officer in the British Army*, Vol. 1 (London, 1800), p. 28; Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 36-8.

<sup>62</sup> Anthony Bruce, *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871* (London, 1980), pp. 6-31.

obtaining and selling more valuable commissions allowed officers the chance to turn a profit.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, purchase had perceived ideological benefits. The purchase system was theorised as drawing men of property who were personally invested in the defence of Britain's interests into the officer corps, while a commission's status as personal property was seen to act as a safeguard against monarchical control of the army, as a monarch stripping an officer's commission would be considered an act of robbery.<sup>64</sup> The process of purchasing a commission during the eighteenth century, as described by J.A. Houlding and Richard Glover, was relatively straightforward. A prospective officer purchased an ensigncy, second lieutenancy, or cornetcy from the government by lodging money with a regimental agent when a vacancy opened, who then passed the money on to the seller.<sup>65</sup> While prices were officially fixed, the cost of commissions reflected the esteem and exclusivity of a regiment. During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, a commission in a line regiment cost £400, rising to £735 in the dragoons or dragoon guards, £900 in the Foot Guards, £1050 in the Royal Horse Guards, and £1600 in the prestigious Life Guards.<sup>66</sup>

The purchase system was an accepted facet of military life by the time of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. It had helped shape the social make-up and ideological outlook of the officer corps; however, the proportion of officers who purchased their commissions can be overstated. Stephen Brumwell and Houlding both suggested that purchase accounted for two-thirds of new commissions during the eighteenth century.<sup>67</sup> As the army expanded during the period 1793-4, this rate looked set to continue, as the War Office expanded the army by creating new units with commissions available for purchase, allowing the War Office to collect revenue from each commission sold.<sup>68</sup> By the time of the Peninsular War, however, the proportion of first commissions obtained by purchase had dropped to nineteen-and-a-half per cent, discounting the artillery and engineers, where commissions could not be purchased.<sup>69</sup> Michael Glover attributed this decline to the policy of augmenting existing units by adding additional battalions to their strength, rather than creating new regiments.<sup>70</sup> Commissions and subsequent promotions created by augmentation could only be given freely, a policy which Glover

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<sup>63</sup> Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, pp. 145-6.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and Administration in the British Army, 1714-63* (Manchester, 1985), p. 89; Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 36; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 100-2; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, pp. 146-7.

<sup>66</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army Against Napoleon*, p. 140.

<sup>67</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 84-5; Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 100.

<sup>68</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 227.

<sup>69</sup> Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage, and Promotion', p. 212.

<sup>70</sup> Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage, and Promotion', p. 212.

calculated saw the number of commissions increase to 10, 590 in 1814, of which only 2, 000 were had by purchase.<sup>71</sup>

The data for commissions and promotions in this study has been compiled from a variety of sources. In the first instance, the *Army Lists* for the period 1779-1878 have been consulted to ascertain the date of officers' first commissions and subsequent promotions.<sup>72</sup> Published annually, the *Army List* listed every officer on full or half-pay, and included the dates at which each officer attained their current rank within the regiment and the army. As the *Army List* does not detail the means by which an officer obtained their commission, information about how officers got their commissions has been obtained primarily from the *London Gazette*, the government periodical which published details of commissions and promotions. This same method was applied by Michael Glover in three studies into commissions and promotions at the time of the Peninsular War.<sup>73</sup> Where possible, the *Gazette* publications have been cross-checked against other sources, such as personal testimonies, and an 1828 government circular sent to retired officers on half-pay, which recorded biographical details of each officer.<sup>74</sup> Even with reference to several sources, there are still seven instances where the circumstances of an officer's first commission cannot be conclusively ascertained. Where there is a discrepancy between the dates of a commission as published in the *Gazette* and as it appears in the *Army List*, the date from the *Army List* has been used, as this was the date routinely consulted by officers when examining seniority within their regiment and the army.

As demonstrated in Figure 1.6, the proportion of purchased commissions for officers in this study is higher than the nineteen-and-a-half per cent found at the time of the Peninsular War; yet lower than the two-thirds figure suggested by Brumwell and Houlding for the eighteenth century. Of seventy-eight commissions in this study, forty-six, or fifty-nine per cent, were obtained freely; twenty-five, or just over thirty-two per cent were purchased; with the remaining seven, or nine per cent, unknown. When the six commissions awarded to artillery and engineer officers, who could not purchase their commissions, are discounted, the purchased proportion expands to nearly thirty-six per cent. In part, the relatively high representation of officers who purchased their commissions can be attributed to the prominence of Guards and cavalry officers in this study, branches of the military which had higher rates of purchase than the line. During the Peninsular War, forty-seven per cent of newly commissioned cavalry officers in the wider army purchased their commissions; while forty-four per cent of Guards

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<sup>71</sup> Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 232.

<sup>72</sup> The National Archives, London (hereafter, TNA) WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

<sup>73</sup> 'Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage, and Promotion'; Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions'; Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 76-89.

<sup>74</sup> TNA WO 25/744-779, Returns of Officers' Services.

officers purchased their ensigncies.<sup>75</sup> For the same period, Glover found that only seventeen per cent of line officers purchased their ensigncies or second-lieutenancies.<sup>76</sup> The Guards and cavalry officers included in this study were considerably more likely to have purchased their commissions than their comrades: over sixty-one per cent of cavalry officers bought their way into the army, while nearly sixty-seven per cent of Guards officers did the same. The proportion of officers who purchased commissions in the line is also higher than the figure identified by Glover: just under one-quarter of commissions in the line were purchased. Contributing to this inflated number of purchased commissions is the odd occurrence of one officer who purchased two commissions during his career. Bakewell of the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot purchased an ensigncy in 1810 and was promoted to lieutenant without purchase in 1812. Bakewell sold his lieutenancy in 1813 due to ill-health, before re-purchasing an ensigncy in the 27<sup>th</sup> in early - 1815.<sup>77</sup>

**Figure 1.6 Rates of Purchased Commissions**

Branch	Free	%	Purchase	%	Unknown	%
Guards	3	33.3	6	66.7	-	-
Cavalry	4	30.8	8	61.5	1	7.7
Line	31	64.4	11	23.9	6	12.5
Artillery/Engineers	8	100	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	46	59	25	32.1	7	9

Commission data compiled from official notices in the *London Gazette*, personal accounts, and TNA WO 25/744-779, Returns of Officers' Services.

As suggested by the fact that the majority of commissions in this study and the wider army were given freely, lacking the money to purchase a commission was not an impediment to becoming an officer. For officers without the money or need to purchase their commissions, there were several ways to obtain a free commission. A prospective officer could submit an application for a commission, accompanied by a recommendation, to the commander in chief in the hope of being appointed to a vacant ensigncy or cornetcy.<sup>78</sup> Other, less direct, pathways to a commission were also available. As an aid to recruitment, from 1808 militia officers who could persuade forty rank and file from their militia regiment to transfer to a line regiment would receive a recommendation to a vacant commission in that regiment.<sup>79</sup> The practice of 'recruiting for rank' proved popular; Glover calculated that one in five new officers during the Peninsular War joined

<sup>75</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 44.

<sup>76</sup> Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage, and Promotion', p. 212.

<sup>77</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter NAM) 1975-09-75, Robert Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. II, pp. 22-5.

<sup>78</sup> James, *The Regimental Companion*, Vol. I, p. 28.

<sup>79</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, pp. 77-8.

the army in this way.<sup>80</sup> Four officers in this study obtained commissions in this way. Two of these officers, John Kincaid and George Simmons, both recruited to obtain commissions in the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles, an unsurprising occurrence when the popularity of the 95<sup>th</sup> is taken into account. A light infantry regiment as opposed to a stock line regiment, the 95<sup>th</sup> was renowned for intrepid tactics and its distinctive dark green uniform. The 95<sup>th</sup> proved so popular for volunteers from the militia that the regiment formed a third battalion in 1809.<sup>81</sup>

Two final paths to a commission, promotion from the ranks, and serving as a 'gentleman volunteer', were also used by officers in this study. As will be explored further in Chapter Two, officers in these categories complicated the relationship between holding a commission and gentility through their association with common soldiering. Officers elevated from the ranks were traditionally in the minority of officers, and comprised just over five per cent of new officers during the Peninsular War.<sup>82</sup> Officers promoted from the ranks were generally non-commissioned officers who received a commission as recognition of long service, or who were recognised as being of sufficient character so to hold a commission.<sup>83</sup> Exceptional individual or regimental conduct could also result in a commission, as was the case with one officer in this study, William Gavin, who received an ensigncy as a result of the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regiment's bravery at Fuentes d'Onoro in 1811.<sup>84</sup> Gentleman volunteers were a category of officers who had no official status within the army. With the permission of a regiment's commander, a volunteer served with a regiment's rank and file, until a free commission became available for them.<sup>85</sup> Three officers in this study were volunteers, and are slightly represented when compared to the Peninsular army, where volunteers comprised four-and-a-half per cent of new officers.<sup>86</sup>

### **Promotions**

Promotions, just like commissions, could be purchased. Each rank was valued higher than the one previous. A purchased lieutenancy in the line cost £550 and a captaincy £1, 500.<sup>87</sup> Ranks in the Guards and cavalry were more expensive than in line regiments. A purchased lieutenancy in

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<sup>80</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 40.

<sup>81</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, p. 81.

<sup>82</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 38.

<sup>83</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 38; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 95.

<sup>84</sup> Henry J. T. Hildyard, *Historical Record of the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regiment Light Infantry, from its Formation in 1777* (London, 1876), p. 81.

<sup>85</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 39.

<sup>86</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 39.

<sup>87</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 152.



the Guards cost £1, 500, and a captaincy £3, 500.<sup>88</sup> The same ranks in the dragoons cost £997 and £2, 782 respectively.<sup>89</sup> Officers who had purchased rank previously did not need to pay the full cost of the next rank, but only the price difference between the two ranks.<sup>90</sup> When an officer who had purchased rank intended to sell-out from the service, the first option on the vacant commission was given to the most senior officer of the next rank down, and then to each subsequent officer in seniority if that officer could not afford the purchase price.<sup>91</sup> How far purchase influenced promotion during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period has been the subject of much scholarly interest. Charles Oman emphasised the importance of purchase and patronage, arguing that these factors were ruthlessly employed by wealthy officers to achieve promotion, while poorer officers waited 'vainly' for a free promotion.<sup>92</sup> During periods of peace, certainly, the ability to purchase promotions was essential to advancing in rank.<sup>93</sup> A lack of appropriate governance of the purchase system in the period 1793-5 also allowed officers of junior years to rapidly purchase rank. Blakiston, an ensign at age nine, was a lieutenant by purchase less than two months later, while Richard Glover noted instances of an eleven year-old becoming a captain, and a seventeen year-old commanding a regiment in Flanders.<sup>94</sup>

Following the disastrous 1793-5 Low Countries campaign, however, regulations surrounding commissions were tightened. A minimum age requirement of sixteen was more rigidly enforced, as were minimum service requirements, with an officer needing to have served at least two years as a subaltern before they could become a captain, and at least seven years total before becoming a major.<sup>95</sup> Coupled with the overall reduction in purchasable commissions owing to the policy of augmentation and non-purchasable vacancies created by death, these reforms curbed the overall influence of purchase on promotion. In contrast to Oman's assertion, only twenty per cent of promotions during the Peninsular War were purchased, with the majority, seventy per cent, decided by seniority.<sup>96</sup> Rates of purchase were higher in the Guards and cavalry, with fifty per cent purchased and forty-five per cent given freely, than in the line, where fewer than eighteen per cent of promotions were purchased.<sup>97</sup> Up to and including the rank of major, the officers in this study purchased their promotions more regularly than their comrades in the wider army. Excluding three promotions of unknown method and promotions in the

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<sup>88</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 152.

<sup>89</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 152.

<sup>90</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 151.

<sup>91</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 100-2; Charles Oman, *Wellington's Army, 1809-1814*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1913), p. 198.

<sup>92</sup> Oman, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 198-201.

<sup>93</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 110-11.

<sup>94</sup> Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, pp. 148-51; Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', p. 228.

<sup>95</sup> Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 152.

<sup>96</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 82.

<sup>97</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 82-6.

artillery and engineers, there were a total of 119 promotions amongst this set of officers, fifty-three per cent of which were had freely, and forty-seven per cent purchased. Cavalry officers had the highest rate of purchase, at ninety-two per cent, followed by the Foot Guards, who split evenly between purchase and non-purchase, and then the line, where thirty-two per cent of promotions were purchased.

The higher than average rates of purchased commissions and promotions in this cohort suggests that the officers in this study were more likely to possess the means to purchase rank than their comrades. On average, the officers in this study could expect to serve two years before advancing one step in rank, nine years before their second step, and an average of nineteen years before being promoted to field rank. For officers in the artillery and engineers, where rank could not be purchased, there was little to do but wait for promotion. The eight artillery and engineering officers in this study served an average of one-and-a-half years for their 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenancy, and ten-and-a-half years for their 2<sup>nd</sup> Captaincy. In the line, purchase allowed officers to advance slightly faster than their comrades. Line officers who did not purchase could expect to become lieutenants after nearly two years, while those who purchased waited a little over a year. Furthermore, officers who purchased their captaincy became captains after an average of six years' service, compared with eleven years for those who waited for a free company. In the Foot Guards, promotion could be tortuously slow, irrespective of purchase. As an added advantage, however, a lieutenant in the Guards held the army rank of captain, and a captain the army rank of lieutenant-colonel, tempering a lack of regimental advancement. As calculated by Glover, of the seventy-five ensigns spread across the three Guards regiments in 1809, only eighteen became lieutenants within five years.<sup>98</sup> The Guards officers in this study who purchased their lieutenancy waited five years for their lieutenancy, compared with three-and-a-half years for those who received free promotions, suggesting that circumstance was more important than money for securing these officers' promotions. The four Guards officers in this study who joined from 1810 onwards advanced more rapidly than those who joined before. Of the five who joined before 1810, only one became a lieutenant before serving five years, despite three purchasing their lieutenancy. The four officers who joined from 1810 on, when the Guards were in near constant service in the Peninsula, Holland, and at Waterloo, all became lieutenants within four years, all receiving their promotions freely.

The small sample size and the domination of cavalry officers who purchased their ranks limit the comparisons that can be made between those who purchased, and those who did not; however, the regularity of purchase by cavalry officers suggests that purchase was something of a necessity in certain cavalry regiments. Cavalry officers below the rank of major had the

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<sup>98</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 88.

highest rates of purchase in the army during the Peninsular War, with nearly forty-three per cent purchasing their lieutenancies, while sixty per cent purchased their captaincies.<sup>99</sup> Eighty per cent of the cavalry officers in this study purchased their lieutenancies, after a wait of one-and-a-half years. Of the eleven cavalry officers who became captains, ten purchased their troop, with one acquired in an unknown way.

It would appear for officers in this study that the effects of war on overall promotion trends were of greater importance for achieving relatively quick promotion than the capacity to purchase rank, particularly in the Guards and cavalry. In this respect, the officers in this study followed an established eighteenth-century pattern of slow promotion during peace time, punctuated by relatively quick promotion during war. In 1740, an ensign of a foot regiment could expect to serve an average of eleven and a-half years before becoming a lieutenant and nineteen years before becoming a captain.<sup>100</sup> During the American War of Independence, an ensign of foot likely spent only two years on average in the service before being promoted to lieutenant, and only seven years on average before becoming a captain.<sup>101</sup> For lieutenants in this study who avoided being placed on half-pay in the post-1815 army reductions, the wait for a captaincy was long. On average, a captain of the line who became captain after 1815 had served a little over fifteen

years, compared with eight and-a-half years during the period 1808-15, and five years in the period 1793-1808. The longest serving of these was John Malcolm, who was into his nineteenth year of service with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Foot before he became a captain. George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards had been a subaltern for even longer, becoming a captain during his twenty-first year of service.

### ***Personal Economy***

While overseeing the training of Britain's Light Infantry regiments at Shorncliffe as colonel of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot in January 1804, Sir John Moore advised the parents of a prospective officer:

It is difficult in these times for a Subaltern to live upon his pay. There are some few who do it, but it requires a degree of economy and attention which few young men, at starting, are equal to. I should recommend an allowance of not less than £50, nor

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<sup>99</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 83.

<sup>100</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 110.

<sup>101</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 110-11.

above £100. This will put him on a par with most of his comrades, and still oblige him to pay attention to economy.<sup>102</sup>

Moore's assessment of the financial situation of his subalterns highlights the competing aims of maintaining the lifestyle requisite of an officer and a gentleman, particularly in fashionable regiments such as the 52<sup>nd</sup>, and the need to avoid the pitfall of falling into poverty or debt. As shown by Alan Guy, this pattern of financial difficulty had been established during the eighteenth century. Meagre pay ensured that routine expenses of food and equipment could place an officer into arrears, particularly in regiments where an officer was expected to maintain the social standards of the regiment.<sup>103</sup> This section explores the financial lives of junior officers firstly by examining the standard pay rates and daily deductions shared by all officers.

**Figure 1.7 Daily and Annual Pay of Junior Officers, 1810**

<b>Foot Guards</b>	<b>Daily Pay £ s d</b>	<b>Yearly Pay £ s d</b>
Ensign	0 5 10	106 9 2
Lieutenant	0 7 10	142 19 2
Captain	0 16 6	301 2 6
<b>Cavalry</b>		
Cornet	0 8 0	146 0 0
Lieutenant	0 9 0	164 5 0
Captain	0 14 7	266 2 11
<b>Line Infantry</b>		
Ensign or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	0 5 3	95 16 3
Lieutenant	0 6 6	119 2 6
Lieutenant of 7+Years' Service	0 7 6	136 17 6
Captain	0 10 6	191 12 6

Figures taken from Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 143-5.

Figure 1.7 outlines the 1810 daily and annual pay of junior officers in the line infantry, the Foot Guards, and the cavalry, excluding the Household Cavalry.<sup>104</sup> Ensigns in the line were the lowest paid of all officers, and received 5s 3d per day in pay. A lieutenant in the line was paid 6s 6d per day, with an extra shilling per day paid to lieutenants who had served for seven or more years, and a captain 10s 6d per day. Pay rates were higher in the Foot Guards. For ensigns and

<sup>102</sup> Sir John Moore, quoted in Carola Oman, *Sir John Moore* (London, 1953), p. 326.

<sup>103</sup> Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>104</sup> Figures taken from Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 143-5.

lieutenants, this difference was marginal: only 7*d* more daily for an ensign, and 1*s* 10*d* for a lieutenant. Captains in Guards regiments were paid markedly more than their counterparts in the line, receiving 6*s* more per day than a captain of the line. Cavalry officers were paid the highest of any subalterns, with cornets and lieutenants receiving 8*s* and 9*s* respectively as daily pay. Captains of cavalry were paid around 4*s* more a day than line captains, but still 2*s* less than Guards captains.

Living off this pay was a task fraught with difficulty. As highlighted in Figure 1.8, junior officers were subject to daily wage deductions, which reduced their pay significantly. The biggest deduction from an officer's pay was the daily deduction for rations, with upwards of three-quarters of daily pay being spent on food. The method and rate of payment for rations varied between regiments. Some regiments deducted pay; others issued separate mess bills to individual officers.<sup>105</sup> While daily subsistence was nominally more expensive for Guards officers, the percentage of pay devoted to food in the Guards was slightly less than in the line. An ensign of the line, for example, devoted eighty-one per cent of his pay to rations, compared to seventy-seven per cent for a Guards ensign. In addition to deductions made for rations there were a number of other stoppages made, amounting to between fifteen and twenty per cent of annual pay.<sup>106</sup> All officers contributed one day's pay to the upkeep of the Chelsea Pensioner's Hospital, an 'agency' fee paid to cover the regiment's running costs, usually five per cent of annual pay, and income tax of five per cent for officers earning less than £150 and ten per cent for those earning more this figure.<sup>107</sup> An additional fee of five per cent of annual pay for 'poundage', a fee paid to a regiment's agent, was paid by all officers before 1797, and only by officers who were ranked captain or higher thereafter.<sup>108</sup> The effect of these deductions was to leave junior officers with precious little actual pay: after all daily and annual deductions were taken into account, an ensign in the line could be expected to have a daily net pay of 5*d*, and an ensign in the Guards marginally more at 7*d*.<sup>109</sup> Out of this pay, officers also had to cover extra costs such as laundry fees and paying servants: while an ensign stationed in Ireland, John Patterson of the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot calculated that these additional costs reduced his daily pay to zero.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 147.

<sup>106</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 146.

<sup>107</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 146.

<sup>108</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 146; Thomas Reide, *A Treatise on Military Finance, Containing the Pay and Allowances in Camp, Garrison, and Quarters of the British Army*, Vol. I (London, 1805), p. 23.

<sup>109</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 148-50.

<sup>110</sup> John Patterson, *Camps and Quarters: Scenes and Impressions of Military Life*, Vol. I (London, 1840), p. 144.

**Figure 1.8 Daily Pay Deductions for Rations**

<b>Foot Guards</b>	<b>Daily Deduction £ s d</b>	<b>Net Daily Pay after Deduction £ s d</b>
Ensign	0 4 6	0 1 4
Lieutenant	0 6 0	0 1 10
Captain	0 12 6	0 4 0
<b>Line Infantry</b>		
Ensign or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	0 4 3	0 1 0
Lieutenant	0 5 0	0 1 6
Captain	0 8 0	0 2 6

Figures taken from Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, pp. 143-5.

The straitened nature of an officer's pay situation shifted the onus of economy onto individual officers. Sir John Moore's observation about the necessity of subalterns having an annual allowance suggests an underlying relationship between private means and the officer corps, a relationship also reflected in the belief that the purchase system would bring gentlemen of some degree of wealth into the army.<sup>111</sup> Patterson noted how the ability to draw additional money represented the difference between security and poverty and recalled, "The poor fellow who couldn't occasionally bleed his friends, or draw on the purse of some old "nuncle", was reduced to a sad dilemma; his countenance looked particularly blue the expiration of the month, and was fully as long as the bills that lay upon his table."<sup>112</sup> With the exception of officers commissioned from the ranks, who received a £50 payment for their equipment and uniform, the initial cost of equipping an officer during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period fell on the new officer. An average uniform, including sword, cost £9 13s; however, officers joining fashionable regiments could pay more for their full equipment: an officer joining the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot spent £57 18s 6d, while an enquiry into the expenditure of the 15<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons stated that a new cornet needed to spend £458 1s 6d.<sup>113</sup> Once in the army, preparations for campaign were partially covered, with officers travelling to the Peninsula allowed to draw two months' pay in advance, and the West Indies and America, three months' pay, as well as an embarkation allowance of £20 to pay for supplies for the voyage.<sup>114</sup>

For officers in the Foot Guards and the cavalry, having additional income was imperative, as a heightened sense of gentlemanliness and refinement permeated the cultures of these regiments, with officers conscious to maintain this standard of living. The financial dealings of John Lucie

<sup>111</sup> Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline*, p. 89.

<sup>112</sup> Patterson, *Camps and Quarters*, Vol. I, pp. 144-5.

<sup>113</sup> Burnham and McGuigan, *The British Army*, p. 141; Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 43.

<sup>114</sup> Reide, *A Treatise on Military Finance*, p. 228.

Blackman, the son of a director of the Bank of England and a subaltern in the Coldstream Guards from 1812 until his death at Waterloo, reveal the financial demands placed on officers in this regiment. With an annual allowance of £150 from his father, Blackman was certainly from a family of means; however, he was unprepared for just how much money he would have to outlay on campaign. By May 1812, Blackman had spent all £150 of his allowance after arriving in the Peninsula, Blackman spent £51 15s on mules to carry his baggage, before having to spend another £45 as one mule was stolen, and its replacement proved to be inadequate.<sup>115</sup> Blackman was not alone in spending large amounts on animals. John Rous, an aristocratic subaltern also in the Coldstream, spent £118 13s on a horse, two mules and a pony when he arrived in Lisbon in 1812.<sup>116</sup> The outlay on mules for baggage was necessary owing to the large amount of equipment Blackman carried: a letter from an outfitter in Lisbon to Blackman's father revealed Blackman spent £84 6s 7d in November 1812 on a tent with a marquee; a bed and bedding; candlesticks and candles; silver tablespoons, tea spoons, mugs, six pairs of knives and forks; as well as a larder full of food, including: hams, cheese, tea, sugar, and chocolate.<sup>117</sup>

### ***Theatres of War***

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars defined the careers of the officers in this study. Of the seventy-seven officers included, only four held their commissions before the outbreak of war. By 1830, however, only eighteen remained in the service. Seven officers died on active service, with the remaining fifty-two having retired from the army, sold their commissions, or been reduced to half-pay in post-war demobilisations. Figure 1.9 provides the average service length of officers in this study by period. Not including periods spent on half-pay, or the service of the seven officers in this study who died on active duty, the officers in this study served an average of twenty years. The scale and duration of war with France allowed the time for officers who were commissioned before 1803 to carve out a lengthy career by war's end. Charles Steevens of the 20<sup>th</sup> Foot, for example, was commissioned in 1795, and retired in 1818 as a lieutenant-colonel. The average length of service for those who were commissioned before 1803 was twenty years; however, only two officers commissioned during this period remained in the army beyond 1830. For officers commissioned during the period 1803-15, the average service length was also twenty years, suggesting a broad trend of long service. Both of these figures are

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<sup>115</sup> Ensign John Lucie Blackman, 24 May 1812, in John Lucie Blackman, *'It all Culminated at Hougoumont': The Letters of John Lucie Blackman, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2009), pp. 23-4.

<sup>116</sup> John Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: the Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>117</sup> Blackman, *'It all Culminated at Hougoumont'*, p. 42.

inflated by a handful of general officers of very long service, such as John Aitchison, who died during what was technically his sixty-sixth year of service. As noted by McGuffie, however, the presence of general officers on the *Army List* can be misleading, as, unless a general officer was employed on a specific service, they were unpaid, rendering their rank largely titular.<sup>118</sup>

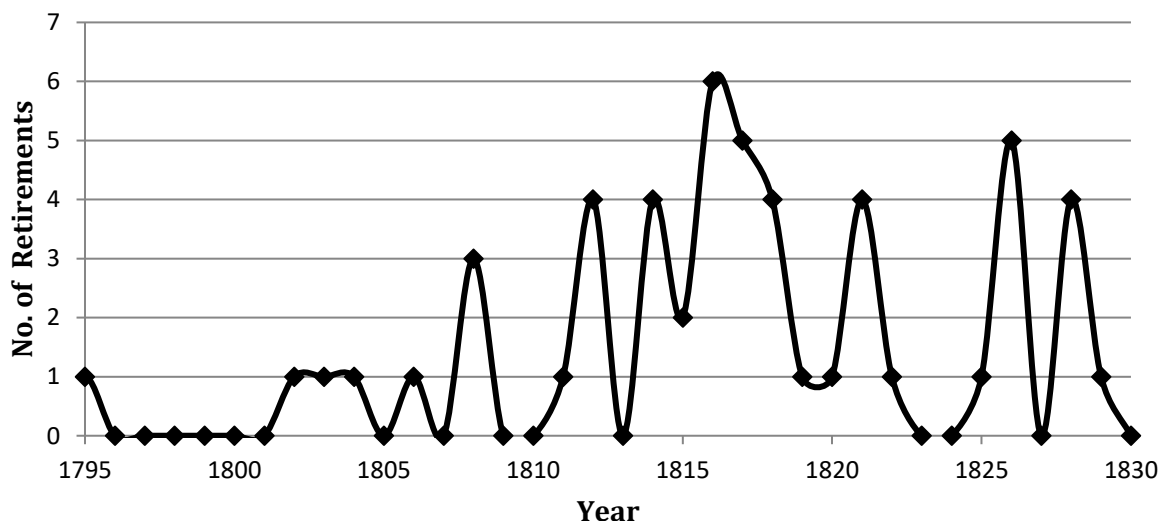
Perhaps a greater indicator of officers' careerist tendencies is their reluctance to leave the army during conflict. As shown in Figure 1.10, there were only thirteen retirements or reductions to half-pay between 1793 and 1813, with four officers forcibly placed on half-pay in the reductions of 1814. Surviving the reductions of the army in the post-war period was essential for officers with career aspirations which extended beyond the Napoleonic Wars. Twenty-three officers retired or were reduced in the period 1815-21; just under a third of the surviving officers in this study. Further indication of the careerism of these officers is their average length of service of twelve-and-half years, excluding time spent on half-pay, up to 1820.

**Figure 1.9 Average Number of Years Served by Period**

Commissioned Pre-1803	20
Commissioned 1803-15	20
Service up to 1820	12.5
Overall	20

Service length data compiled from TNA WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

**Figure 1.10 Retirements by Year, 1795-1830**



Retirement data compiled from TNA WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

<sup>118</sup> McGuffie, 'The Significance of Military Rank', pp. 217-8.



Generally long-serving and careerist in outlook, the officers included in this study served in a wide range of theatres and often left accounts that related to more than one campaign. The accounts drawn on for this thesis, therefore, reflect the depth and breadth of the military experiences of the British army during this conflict. Five officers in this study left detailed accounts about home service, providing an insight into the lives of regular soldiers while in Britain. Four of the officers drawn on for this study wrote accounts of the Low Countries campaign of 1793-5, two left accounts of the 1799 Low Countries expedition, and one of garrison duty on Minorca in 1800. Three officers served in the West Indies between 1793 and 1802, in the campaigns against the French Revolutionary armies and the slave insurrection on Saint Domingue, while another three served with the 1801 Egyptian campaign. Seven officers fought in the West Indies between 1803 and 1815. The majority of officers' testimonies drawn on for this study come from officers who served during the period 1807-15, reflecting the size of the British army, which reached a record size during the Napoleonic period. While two officers in this study served with the ill-fated 1807 South American expedition, and five served in North America against America in the War of 1812 or on garrison duty, accounts left by officers involved in European expeditions dominate this study. Six officers served as a part of the 18,000 strong expedition to Copenhagen in 1807, and another four served as part of the 44,000 strong 1809 expedition to Walcheren in Holland, which ended in disaster as the British army was decimated by malaria.<sup>119</sup> Two more officers served in the 1813-4 expedition to Holland. The bulk of the source material in this study relates in some way to the 1808-14 Peninsular War, with sixty officers spending at least some time in the Peninsula. In many ways, this dominance is unsurprising, with eighty-eight British regiments and some 200,000 deployments during the Peninsular War.<sup>120</sup> Fifteen officers fought in the ultimate episode of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the 1815 Waterloo campaign.

In some ways, the officers considered by this thesis are exceptional. The rate of purchased commissions and promotions within this group is somewhat higher than they were in the wider army. Yet, the officers whose accounts have been drawn on for this thesis reflect the diversity of experience of junior British army officers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. This diversity is reflected in this cohort's social backgrounds, nationalities, ages, wealth, and the branches of the army they served with. The officers included in this study are drawn from across the social spectrum, ranging from socially elite and wealthy aristocrats, to men of

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<sup>119</sup> Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815* (London, 1999), pp. 203-4.

<sup>120</sup> Ron McGuigan, 'British Regiments in the Peninsular War, 1808-1814', *The Napoleon Series* (2009), [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/Britain/Strength/c\\_RegimentsinPeninsula.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/Britain/Strength/c_RegimentsinPeninsula.html) (accessed 15 Mar. 2016); Andrew Bamford, 'A Computation of the Number of British Troops Deployed to the Peninsular Theatre, 1808-1814', *The Napoleon Series* (2008), [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/Britain/Strength/c\\_Strength1814.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/Britain/Strength/c_Strength1814.html).

humble origin who were commissioned from the ranks after a period of lengthy service. These officers were also drawn from across the nations of Britain and Ireland, including a rare Irish Catholic officer. The majority of the officers included in this study were young, a trend which reflects the overall youthfulness of the British officer corps, while there are also a handful of older officers whose experiences are also of valuable insight. This diversity ensures that this thesis provides a window into many aspects of junior officers' experiences and identities during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

## Chapter Two: Polite Masculinity and the Junior Army Officer

At seemingly every turn, Georgian army officers were reminded that they were expected to simultaneously be ‘officers and gentlemen’. The 1804 *Military Mentor*, a published series of advice letters for young officers, was written so as to comprise: ‘a course of elegant instruction, calculated to unite the characters and accomplishments of the gentleman and the soldier.’<sup>1</sup> In eighteenth-century Britain, gentlemanliness was bound to notions of ‘politeness’ as well as to social standing. ‘Politeness’ encompassed many attributes: refined manners, elegance, taste, and sensibility are all characteristics historians have associated with the ‘polite gentleman’.<sup>2</sup> Accomplishment and character went hand-in-hand in Georgian polite society. Gentlemen were expected to display their polished character through competence at dancing, drawing, and art, while also displaying their sophisticated literary tastes, and their social ease in polite company.<sup>3</sup> As emphasised by Lawrence Klein, the ease and social amity associated with polite interaction was geared to bridge social divides, and to lubricate interactions between individuals of unequal social standing.<sup>4</sup> Representations of polite masculinity, however, often differed from lived practices. Historians have recently begun to explore the divergences between the two. Philip Carter highlighted how polite identities were prone to collapse, with erstwhile ‘polite gentlemen’ engaging in distinctly ‘impolite’ conduct.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Kate Davison has emphasised how politeness was contextual, and revealed how polite men lapsed into ‘bawdy’, less respectable conduct when in familiar company.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter explores junior officers’ lived experiences and identities as ‘polite gentlemen’. Politeness has not been universally associated with the Georgian officer. Roger Norman Buckley argued that the British officer corps in the West Indies exhibited the excesses of gentlemanly masculinity, such as indolence, drunkenness, and sexual misconduct.<sup>7</sup> As this chapter will demonstrate, junior officers could fulfil this image, and worse; yet, it was politeness which

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<sup>1</sup> Anon., *The Military Mentor: Being a Series of Letters Recently Written by a General Officer to his Son*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. I (London, 1804), p. i.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Klein ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, *Historical Journal*, 4 (2002), pp. 869-98; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 90-102; Klein ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, pp. 873-7.

<sup>4</sup> Klein ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, pp. 878-82.

<sup>5</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 163-201.

<sup>6</sup> Kate Davison, ‘Occasional Politeness and Gentlemen’s Laughter in 18<sup>th</sup> C. England’, *The Historical Journal*, 57 (2014), pp. 921-45.

<sup>7</sup> Roger Norman Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies: Society and Military in the Revolutionary Age* (Gainesville, FL, 1998), pp. 338-49.

presents the best model of masculinity for understanding junior officers' behaviour during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. As emphasised by Matthew McCormack, Gavin Daly, and Catriona Kennedy, politeness had an enduring importance for British army officers into the early-nineteenth century, as it provided a model for male behaviour within the officer corps.<sup>8</sup> Polite accomplishment and the military were seen to exist in a complimentary relationship. As revealed by McCormack, for example, dancing was seen to inculcate the bodily comportment required of a soldier.<sup>9</sup>

The first four sections of this chapter focus on how junior officers related to other officers as 'polite gentlemen'. Carter has highlighted how polite identities were constructed not just in relation to women, but other men.<sup>10</sup> Establishing and maintaining a reputation as a 'polite gentleman' was critical for junior officers, as it ensured that they attained and maintained the good graces of their comrades, and also informed junior officers' expectations of their superiors. This chapter also explores some of the limitations of using politeness to understand junior officers' masculine identities. Junior officers often diverted from polite norms to engage in acts of violence and destruction, which could result in their ostracism from the service. Furthermore, the internal social divide which existed between officers of the Foot Guards and cavalry, and officers of the line, suggests that the social bridging aimed for in polite ideals did not always manifest itself in social harmony. This chapter contends that it was largely in relation to other officers that polite conduct was considered essential. To highlight this, the final section of this chapter explores junior officers' attitudes and encounters with women. Interaction with women was central to polite discourses. As shown by Carter, by engaging appropriately with women, gentlemen were seen to 'soften' their natural instincts and attain refinement.<sup>11</sup> While officers interacted with women in ways that highlighted their identities as 'polite gentlemen', or 'men of feeling', there was also another dimension to officers' gender relations. As shown by Jennine Hurl-Eamon, the eighteenth-century army had a masculine culture which celebrated womanising and sexual conquest.<sup>12</sup> Licentious sexual conduct was in direct conflict with polite norms; however, it was officers who aspired to marriage who were scorned. The lack of repercussion for breaching polite norms as regards to women suggests that politeness was

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 118; Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 27; Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, & Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 137-9.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishment and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain', *Cultural & Social History*, 8 (2011), pp. 315-330.

<sup>10</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 66-70.

<sup>12</sup> Jennine Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 95-111.

contextual. Expected to act in line with polite ideals with regards to other officers in the name of cohesion, junior officers were also liable to lapses in their polite identities.

### ***Becoming Officers, Becoming Gentlemen?***

Michael Glover noted that it is unclear as to whether gentlemen became officers, or officers became gentlemen.<sup>13</sup> The relationship between officership and gentlemanliness does not appear to have been as straightforward as the linear relationships suggested by Glover. Officers drew distinctions between themselves and other officers, by either excluding others on social grounds, or by asserting cultural and social distinctions to create degrees of gentlemanliness. The late-Georgian officer corps was socially diverse; however, officers were largely drawn from social classes which could be broadly defined as 'gentlemanly'. Furthermore, prospective officers also expressed the sentiments expected of 'polite gentlemen'. George Hennell, then a volunteer with the 94<sup>th</sup> Foot who was waiting for a vacant commission, responded to the horrific 1812 storming of Badajoz using the language of sensibility to differentiate himself from the rankers he was serving alongside:

You can have no conception of the scene I witnessed, most of the soldiers drunk, staggering about with their plunder ... The want of reflection in numbers of the men surprised me. They were singing and swearing and talking of having a damned narrow escape while their comrades lay round them in heaps dead. It was horrible. It was a lesson for me that I did not let pass without taking a walk in the fields to reflect upon. I have an opportunity of doing this.<sup>14</sup>

Hennell's response mirrored that of officers who witnessed similar actions by the rank and file. As shown by Catriona Kennedy, by drawing on the language of sensibility and introspection, officers were engaged in 'self-fashioning' refined identities to differentiate themselves from the 'coarse' soldiery.<sup>15</sup> In relating his experience of the storming of Badajoz in this manner, therefore, Hennell was displaying his self-identification with polite, refined masculinity, even before he became a full officer.

Acceptance and entry into an institution underpinned by an entrenched sense of gentlemanliness could be expected to encourage the view that one was either a gentleman

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1980), p. 233.

<sup>14</sup> George Hennell, 16 Apr. 1812, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812-1813*, ed. Michael Glover (London, 1979), pp. 18-9.

<sup>15</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 80-1.

already, or became a gentleman by becoming an officer.<sup>16</sup> Prospective officers were certainly encouraged to style themselves as gentlemen from the outset of their career. *The Regimental Companion*, a guide book outlining the duties of British officers, provided the following template for a letter of recommendation: 'Sir, I beg leave to recommend "A.B." as a gentleman fully qualified to hold an ensigncy in his Majesty's regiment of \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_.'<sup>17</sup> By specifically outlining gentlemanliness as a criterion for holding a commission, a recommendation taking this form appears to assume that the applicant was already, in some sense, a gentleman. A letter of recommendation, which applicants for a commission had to have signed by an officer who held the rank of major or higher, could connote gentility.<sup>18</sup> In the context of late-Georgian Britain, where reputation counted for much in determining gentlemanliness, a letter of recommendation could be conceived of as formal recognition of an individual's status as a gentleman. En route to the Low Countries in 1799, Lieutenant John Hunt of the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons observed how a volunteer to his regiment treasured his recommendation:

On board ... was a ... North Briton, who was a volunteer in the expedition. His name was Cameron and he was commencing the life of a Soldier of Fortune, his wardrobe, which was not over large, he carried on his back, and of its contents which he valued most was his letter of recommendation to Sir R. Abercromby, and which I presume fully answered his purpose and expectation, for after the action of the 19<sup>th</sup> September, he was appointed to an Ensigncy.<sup>19</sup>

Hunt's observations highlight how a recommendation for a commission worked as an affirmation of personal status. Cameron's Scottish nationality, reliance on the military as a 'soldier of fortune' and his dearth of personal belongings appear to have made his claims of gentility dubious in Hunt's estimation; yet Cameron's attachment to his recommendation suggests that he saw his recommendation as reflecting his status as a 'gentleman'.

The relationship between acquiring a commission and gentlemanliness does not appear to have been linear, as highlighted by the experiences of two minority groups within the officer corps: 'gentlemen volunteers' and officers commissioned from the ranks. 'Gentleman volunteers' are one of the curiosities of the British army during this period. This small group of officers, who Michael Glover calculated comprised four-and-a-half per cent of new officers in the 1809

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<sup>16</sup> John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 27-8.

<sup>17</sup> Charles James, *The Regimental Companion*, Vol. 1 (London, 1800), p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 1968-07-55, John Hunt, 'Journal of Lieutenant and Adjutant John Hunt', pp. 3-4.

Peninsular army, were men who volunteered to serve with the rank and file of a regiment until a vacancy for a commission became available, but who messed with the regiment's officers.<sup>20</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that some volunteers could be welcomed as gentlemen by their new comrades, while others found acceptance by polite gentlemen difficult. Commissioned as an ensign in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot in July 1812, after serving as a volunteer with the 94<sup>th</sup> Foot, Hennell appeared to have suffered no loss of reputation owing to his time with the ranks, as he was invited to a ball by his colonel soon after being commissioned.<sup>21</sup> This is in line with the pattern of volunteering established as early as the Seven Years' War. As highlighted by Brumwell, volunteers in the mid-eighteenth century army were given priority over men from the ranks on the broad assumption of their gentlemanly character.<sup>22</sup> The connections between volunteering, character, and gentlemanliness are further revealed in the journal of Lieutenant Charles Crowe, then of the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot. Crowe described a popular volunteer, Kinnion, who had initially struggled to ingratiate himself with the regiment's officers, having only been addressed by the colonel. When Crowe and another officer approached him, however, they found Kinnion to be a: 'really nice genteel young man ... so amiable and unassuming th[at] he became our guest and lived as we did.'<sup>23</sup> Crowe's account suggests that volunteers were not automatically welcomed into the mess by their potential fellow officers, and that this was contingent upon the ascertainment of a volunteer's character. This view is compounded by Crowe's wider observations on volunteers. Crowe viewed Kinnion as exceptional, and believed the majority of volunteers were not worthy of attention:

Many people would imagine that there was a great want of good feeling towards volunteers. But numerous as they were, so few had even a slight claim to notice. Generally speaking they were not gentlemanly in appearance, or manners. Some associated with the private soldiers; others, dismayed by the hardships they had to encounter, left in disgust. If the numbers who came out and the few who obtained rank were recorded, the disproportion would be very surprising.<sup>24</sup>

Crowe's allusion to large numbers of volunteers arriving to the army, only to be disappointed in their attempts at gaining a commission, suggests that a highly selective 'weeding out' process took place, in which volunteers deemed to be of inadequate character were rebuffed by their

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Glover, *Wellington's Army in the Peninsula, 1808-1814* (Newton Abbot, 1977), p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 93-5.

<sup>23</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 2 Jun. 1813, in Charles Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier: The Peninsular War Journals of Lieutenant Charles Crowe of the Inniskillings, 1812-1814*, ed. Gareth Glover (Barnsley, 2011), pp. 81-2.

<sup>24</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 2 Jun. 1813, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 82.

potential comrades, a view reinforced by the volunteer Crowe highlighted in contrast to Kinnion: 'a complete churl, better adapted to a musket than an epaulette!'<sup>25</sup>

The ambiguous relationship between gentility and commissions is further highlighted in the case of officers who were promoted from the ranks. This group was a minority and comprised only five-and-a-half per cent of new officers in 1809, with most of these commissions awarded for either long service, or individual acts of merit.<sup>26</sup> This minority status has resulted in a paucity of surviving sources by such officers, with such sources limited by the rudimentary authorial style which characterised rankers' writings.<sup>27</sup> One surviving source, the diary of Ensign David Wainwright, is a frustratingly brief record of the campaigns in which he served, with no personal interjections or elaborations on events, yet still offers some insight into his career progression.<sup>28</sup> Enlisting in 1787, Wainwright was made sergeant major in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Foot in 1794, and was named the regiment's adjutant in 1797. Crucially, this was while the regiment was stationed in the West Indies, where high levels of sickness may have created a shortage of officers, allowing Wainwright to be elevated to adjutant. Commissioned as ensign without purchase in 1799, Wainwright was then able to purchase a lieutenancy in 1800, before retiring in 1802.<sup>29</sup> The diary of William Gavin, who was promoted to ensign and quartermaster in the 71<sup>st</sup> Foot in 1811, suffers from the same limitations. Gavin's account describes his regiment's activities in the period 1806-1815, yet does not make mention of his commission, and does not differentiate his experiences as an officer from those as a non-commissioned officer.<sup>30</sup>

Wainwright's and Gavin's careers reflect the wider career trend of officers promoted from the ranks. Often ushered into the functional roles of adjutant or quarter-master, where practical experience as sergeants could be utilised, rankers promoted into these positions appear to have been broadly tolerated by their fellow subalterns, provided they exhibited proper 'character'.<sup>31</sup> Describing the deaths of officers of the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot in the Pyrenees in 1813, John Patterson praised an ensign who had been promoted from the ranks: 'White had been for many years our Quarter Master Sergeant, and in consequence of his merit; he had lately been promoted in the regiment; he was a man advanced in life, and an excellent worthy character, esteemed by us all.'<sup>32</sup> Lieutenant George Woodberry welcomed the arrival of a new adjutant to the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars in

<sup>25</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 2 Jun. 1813, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>27</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>28</sup> NAM 2007-10-15, David Wainwright, 'Diary of Ensign David Wainwright'.

<sup>29</sup> NAM 2007-10-15, Wainwright, 'Diary of Ensign David Wainwright'.

<sup>30</sup> William Gavin 'The Diary of William Gavin: Ensign and Quarter-Master, 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regiment, 1806-1815', *Highland Light Infantry Chronicle*, ed. Charles Oman (1920-21).

<sup>31</sup> Glover, *Wellington's Army*, pp. 38-9; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 93-5.

<sup>32</sup> John Patterson, *The Adventures of Captain John Patterson: With Notices of the Officers &c. of the 50<sup>th</sup>, Or Queens's Own Regiment* (London, 1837), p. 327.



1813: 'Mr. Duperier, our new adjutant, arrived this morning. He was originally adjutant to the Tenth Hussars, and was before that a Private and rose thru merit. I can only account for the wretched insubordinate state of the Regiment to the want of a good adjutant. Reports speak highly of Mr. Duperier.'<sup>33</sup>

Concerns that men from the ranks had 'unsuitable' characters for holding a commission, however, had played no small role in excluding rankers from being promoted during the eighteenth century, and, as noted by Brumwell, rankers promoted to the position of quarter-master or adjutant still struggled to be accepted as 'real' officers or gentlemen by their peers.<sup>34</sup> This continued into the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. William Grattan of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot offered his opinion of the role of adjutant: 'I always had, and have, an aversion to adjutants raised from the ranks. An adjutant is, properly speaking, the mouth-piece of his commanding officer, and should be a gentleman capable of writing a good official letter; and surely this cannot be expected or looked for in a man raised from the station of a private soldier.'<sup>35</sup> A passing remark by William Tomkinson, then a lieutenant in the 16<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons, suggests that even when former rankers were promoted to positions of relative significance, the social taint of having been with the ranks still remained. Describing officers in the army who actively sought to return home by faking illness in the wake of the failed 1812 siege of Burgos, Tomkinson pointedly noted that the single such officer from the 16<sup>th</sup> had once been a ranker: 'Captain Macintosh (raised from the ranks), went before a medical board and got sick leave to England. He was much better than myself *after* he had passed the board.'<sup>36</sup> Tomkinson's insistence on mentioning Macintosh's low origins in the context of perceived cowardice suggests that Tomkinson connected the two instances, with the underlying assumption that Macintosh's social inferiority resulted in a deficiency of character.

Officers promoted from the ranks were also criticised on the grounds of brutishness. Crowe stated: 'I must confess I generally found such men were the greatest tyrants in the services,' and cited an anecdote of a colonel and former ranker, 'an inhuman monster', who punished a ranker for stealing a leg of mutton by imprisoning him in the 'Black Hole', with a leg of mutton suspended from a string above him.<sup>37</sup> Undoubtedly, there was snobbishness and fear of social inversion inherent in the scepticism of volunteers and officers promoted from the ranks, and the propensity of officers to exclude individuals could only have reinforced a sense of individual

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<sup>33</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 25 Jul. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar in 1813', p. 189.

<sup>34</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, pp. 93-5.

<sup>35</sup> William Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, from 1808 to 1814*, Vol. I (London, 1847), p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular War and Waterloo Campaign, 1809-1815*, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1895), p. 222.

<sup>37</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 6 Dec. 1812, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 25.

gentlemanliness. As will be explored more fully in Chapter Six, junior officers distinguished themselves from the ranks by virtue of their traditional social standing and elevated sensibilities. Implicit in this understanding of leadership was the belief that these were essential qualities, not only for having the personal ability to lead men competently, but to treat and direct their men in a humane manner, and emphasised the importance of affording social inferiors the benevolence expected from a gentleman. In the case of volunteers and men raised from the ranks, the association between common soldiering and brutishness could remove these justifications, weakening their claims to gentlemanliness and leadership. As the ambiguity, and even hostility, towards volunteers and rankers suggests, gentlemanliness was not inherent in the holding of a commission. Rather than viewing the connection between being an officer and gentlemanliness as a linear progression, therefore, it is more revealing to consider the relationship between the officer corps and gentlemanliness as one revolving around reputation. Maintaining the appearance and manners of a gentleman was central to fashioning a sense of gentlemanliness which was palatable to other officers.

### ***Learning Gentlemanliness in the Officers' Mess***

The characteristics that could be associated with the 'polite gentleman' were numerous; however, the culture had an overriding concern for manner and comportment. The correctness of these attributes was believed to reflect the inner virtues and qualities developed as a result of the pursuit of polite accomplishment.<sup>38</sup> As argued by Carter, the aim of politeness was not to construct a rigid set of manners and specific actions that would govern everyday behaviour, but to foster a behavioural style that favoured interpersonal qualities and promoted an ease of behaviour, generosity to associates, and the capacity to please others.<sup>39</sup> Implied in the culture of politeness was a degree of social cohesion. As highlighted by Lawrence Klein, rather than creating equality between two individuals of unequal social standing, politeness aimed to provide a sense of openness which allowed individuals from different social backgrounds to communicate with ease.<sup>40</sup> The ease of manners espoused by polite theorists, for example, smoothed interactions between elites and those who provided services to them.<sup>41</sup> This interchange was a two-way process, with social superiors expected to display benevolence and 'obliging' manners to their social inferiors, affording them the respect due to a gentleman, while

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<sup>38</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, p. 23.

<sup>39</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> Klein 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', p. 879.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Klein 'Politeness for Plebs: Consumption and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London, 1995), pp. 369-74; Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p. 73.

the inferior party was likewise expected to display manners and behaviour which marked them as a polite gentleman worthy of such respect.<sup>42</sup> Such sociability was not confined to the realm of business. Clubs and societies with relatively open memberships allowed for social mixing governed by the rules of politeness.<sup>43</sup> This culture of social ease and respect was crucial to fostering unity within the officer corps. In part, the importance of polite manners to the officer corps can be attributed to the wider culture of politeness, which encouraged interactions between individuals of different social standings. This, however, provides only a partial explanation of politeness' importance to the army. The principles of civility and gentlemanly egalitarianism were not taken for granted, but were deliberately fostered by the regimental system, particularly through the institution of the officers' mess.

The focal point of regimental social life, the officers' mess provided a convivial space for officers reminiscent of social clubs in Britain. The numbers attending could be large, as regiments welcomed officers from other regiments into their mess. Lieutenant Robert Blakeney of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot described his regiment's mess in 1812: 'Upwards of a hundred and fifty officers dined at our mess daily; those of the regiment, together with those of the flank companies sent from Gibraltar, who were of course honorary members.'<sup>44</sup> In theory, the atmosphere within a mess was convivial and free of formality. Patterson described the officers of the 85<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry at their mess as 'a gay set of light bobs.'<sup>45</sup> Alcohol was central to the conviviality of the mess. In the space of a week, Blakeney's mess at Tarifa consumed 2, 000 bottles of alcohol, while at a Christmas mess in 1812, Second Lieutenant Howard Hough of the Royal Artillery recalled giving toasts to: 'All absent friends ... Church and King – Prince Regent of Portugal – England – Lord Wellington – Navy, and many others were well received, and we parted, at a late hour, very well satisfied.'<sup>46</sup> Officers endeavoured to establish a mess under all conditions, even on campaign. Lieutenant Peter Hawker of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dragoons stated that his regiment: 'contrived to establish

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Klein 'Sociability, Politeness, and Aristocratic Self-Formation in the Life and Career of the Second Earl of Shelburne', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), pp. 653-9; Paul Langford, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (1962), pp. 312-6.

<sup>43</sup> James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell, 'Introduction', in *Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell (Dublin 2010), pp. 20-3; John Money, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1800* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 98-117.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures, and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment, An Autobiography*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Patterson, *The Adventures of Captain John Patterson*, p. 122.

<sup>46</sup> Blakeney, *Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 171; Second Lieutenant Henry Hough, 25 Dec. 1812, in Henry Hough, 'The Journal of Second Lieutenant Henry Hough, Royal Artillery, 1812-3', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 61 (1916), p. 40.

an excellent mess' while supplies were short during the Peninsular War, owing to the resourcefulness of one officer, who was both an excellent scavenger and cook.<sup>47</sup>

The officers' mess had an important pedagogical function, and the jovial atmosphere it generated was seen to instil civility and respect, and build camaraderie between officers of all ranks. The 1813 standing orders of the 85<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry advised:

Comfort and unanimity at meals ... is the service of friendship and good understanding ... all Officers shall belong to one Mess ... any Officer withdrawing himself from it, indicates in him a wish not to corps with his brother officers, in which case, the sooner an Officer with this disposition leaves the Regiment, the better.<sup>48</sup>

Recalling his time as a newly commissioned ensign in his memoir, Thomas Staunton St. Clair of the 1st Foot reflected on the officers' mess, 'A regimental mess is without doubt a most judicious establishment in our army; as by collecting together the whole of the officers of a corps, under certain wise rules and regulations, they form an agreeable society, in which, generally speaking, harmony and good fellowship prevail.'<sup>49</sup>

The mess was expected to inculcate a sense of intimacy and friendship which extended further than the civility inherent in polite manners. The experience of newly commissioned officers suggests that displaying appropriate manners was initially important for integration into the social circle of officers, before forming more intimate friendships. Wood advised newly commissioned ensigns to temper their behaviour in the mess:

where the want of politeness, good address, and propriety of speaking, on his first appearance, is often lastingly attended with the most unpleasant consequences. A deficiency in these qualifications will not fail to impress his associates with an unfavourable opinion of him.<sup>50</sup>

The mess provided an opportunity for new officers to observe and learn norms in a social setting. On his first day with his regiment, the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot, Peter Bowlby was informed by his colonel to sit next to the mess vice president, so that he might have someone to advise him

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<sup>47</sup> Peter Hawker, *Journal of a Regimental Officer during the Recent Campaign in Portugal and Spain* (London, 1810), p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> *Standing Orders and Regulations for the 85<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry* (London, 1813), p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Staunton St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies and America, with a Narrative of the Expedition to the Island of Walcheren*, Vol. I (London, 1834), p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer* (London, 1825), p. 10.

when he had had enough wine to drink.<sup>51</sup> Wood stated that the mess was the ideal location for officers: 'to employ themselves in the study of men and manners, which they will find one of incalculable benefit.'<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, the rules which governed the mess aimed to imbue each officer with a sense of gentlemanly value and equality. Initially introduced to his new colonel by his father, Bowlby was instructed by the colonel to attend the mess 'on your own account.'<sup>53</sup> Rank and hierarchy were dispensed with in the space of the mess, encouraging officers to socialise as gentlemen and to consider each other as equals. St. Clair stressed this egalitarianism, 'The commanding officer is as liable to the rules of the mess as the youngest subaltern ... Rank is nothing, and when seated at table they are all upon an equality.'<sup>54</sup> Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards commented on the behaviour of his brother William of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons, who had gotten into a dispute after failing to obey orders in the mess:

At a mess table the Commanding Officer is upon a par with the others, and any assumption of authority there is always looked upon with the greatest jealousy. I know that had the Colonel of my own regiment used the words imputed to Major Fraser, not an officer would have been found to sit at table with him.<sup>55</sup>

While Mills' status as a guardsman and his landed background likely contributed to him having a heightened sense of gentlemanly equality, his suggestion that even a regiment's commanding officer could be ostracised if he failed to adhere to the rules of the mess speaks to how important the assumption of respect and equality could be within certain regiments.

The responsibility of running the mess was shared between officers of all ranks, reminding officers of their responsibilities to one another. All officers dining at a mess paid for their food and drink, and general orders were issued to ensure that the cost did not prevent subalterns from joining the mess.<sup>56</sup> Aside from financial responsibility, junior officers could be directly responsible for managing the mess as 'president', a position which was of some significance. Ensign Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards saw the mess presidency as indistinguishable from his other responsibilities, and described it as: '*a most onerous undertaking! & a most*

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<sup>51</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Peter Bowlby', p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern Officer*, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Peter Bowlby', p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies*, Vol. I, pp. 33-4.

<sup>55</sup> Ensign John Mills, 11 Dec. 1812, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), p. 261.

<sup>56</sup> *General Regulations and Orders for the Army* (London, 1811), p. 282.

*important part of an officer's duty.*<sup>57</sup> Interchanging between officers on a weekly basis, the president was responsible for procuring food and drink for the mess, monitoring each officer's consumption of alcohol and issuing subsequent accounts, as well as ensuring that a convivial atmosphere was maintained.<sup>58</sup> Competency in this role built respect for officers amongst their peers. Having acted as president of a special Christmas mess in 1812, Hough noted in his journal: 'The officers called on me and voted their thanks to me for the *able manner* with which I had supported and held the chair ... and expressed themselves much obliged to me for the trouble I had taken in procuring the dinner.'<sup>59</sup> Drawn from a society in which a sociable persona was integral to polite identities, and in which social interaction was intended to bridge social divides, the officers' mess could only have encouraged officers to consider themselves as gentlemen. By removing distinctions of rank, and by reinforcing officers' sense of responsibility to each other, the mess focused officers' attentions on the similarities between officers. The value of the mess, therefore, was not that it encouraged explicit equality between officers, but that it allowed individuals to construct a gentlemanly identity based on the values of politeness and civility, together with an ingrained sense of gentlemanly worth.

### ***Polite Sociability and the Officer Corps***

The interpersonal style encouraged by polite theorists and which was inculcated in the officers' mess resonated widely in the officer corps. Displaying the accommodating manners and tastes of a 'polite gentleman' was central to junior officers' relationships with regimental comrades, unfamiliar officers, and with civilian society. Within the officer corps, polite sociability was essential for facilitating interactions between officers, as recognising each other as 'polite gentlemen' allowed for the bridging of regimental and social differences. En route to the Peninsula in 1814, John Blakiston praised his companions on board his transport ship, only one of whom was known to him: 'They were all gentlemanly men, so that a ten days' passage was spent as pleasantly as sea-sickness ... would allow.'<sup>60</sup> Polite interaction could bridge social divides within the officer. Writing to his father, Captain William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons described his companions on his transport ship home from the Peninsula:

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<sup>57</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 21 May 1813, in Orlando Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War: The Letters of Captain The Honourable Orlando Bridgeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, pp. 170-4; St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies*, Vol. I, pp. 31-4.

<sup>59</sup> Hough, 26 Dec. 1812, in Hough, 'The Journal of Second Lieutenant Henry Hough', p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> John Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe*, Vol. II (London, 1829), p. 139.

I have on Board with me 3 Officers of the Guards who appear very good natured, Gentlemanly Men and take longer in cleaning their Teeth than I do dressing myself entirely; but as we are likely to agree and have made a Bargain with our Master to furnish a most excellent Table for 50 Dollars, I have no doubt of a very pleasant Voyage.<sup>61</sup>

Despite acknowledging that his companions had different conceptions of refinement to him, Bragge's account highlights how sociability focused officers' minds on what they had in common, rather than their differences. Requisite manners could overcome a lack of gentlemanly appearances. In 1812, and also travelling to the Peninsula, Crowe of the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot and his fellow officers encountered a poorly dressed surgeon without provisions: 'We agreed there was no alternative but to admit him to share with us. When he came on board, we were glad to find his address was more gentlemanly than his dress! He very handsomely apologised for not having any sea stock.'<sup>62</sup>

Polite principles can be seen in junior officers' interactions with British civilians, suggesting that a polite identity helped to maintain bonds between the officer corps and the civilian world. In her study of the army's relationship with mid-eighteenth-century English society, Hannah Smith revealed that a mutual culture of politeness allowed army officers to integrate into provincial urban communities, a relationship which remained crucial during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>63</sup> Housed in Winchester Barracks, Ensign William Thornton Keep of the 77<sup>th</sup> Foot amused himself by attending weekly balls with the local gentry and visiting nearby families.<sup>64</sup> On solitary recruiting duty in Bury in 1797, Lieutenant Charles Steevens of the 20<sup>th</sup> Foot found himself: 'wandering about, without any society' and 'looked upon as a scamp' owing to his predecessor's poor behaviour.<sup>65</sup> Making a favourable impression over dinner with the local clergyman, however, introduced Steevens to several families, and he: 'left Bury with much regret, as I had met there with greatest attention.'<sup>66</sup>

Conversely, officers who felt they lacked refinement or manners could feel isolated, while uncivil officers faced being shunned by their comrades. Complaining of a lack of friends, both

<sup>61</sup> Captain William Bragge, 3 Apr. 1814, in William Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait, 1811-1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons*, ed. S.A.C. Cassels (New York, NY, 1963), p. 127.

<sup>62</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 8 Nov. 1812, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Hannah Smith, 'The Army, Provincial Urban Communities, and Loyalist Cultures in England, 1714-50', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2011), p. 152.

<sup>64</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Nov. 1808, 19 Jan. 1809, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsular, 1808-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1997), pp. 21-2.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Steevens, *Reminiscences of My Military Life, from 1795 to 1818*, ed. Nathaniel Steevens (Winchester, 1878), p. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Steevens, *Reminiscences of my Military Life*, pp. 6-7.

within and outside his regiment, while garrisoned in Glasgow, Captain John Sinclair of the 79<sup>th</sup> Foot pointed to his deficient manners as the cause in a letter to his sister: 'I have no other acquaintance here, but at Sir Buchanan's I am not a fashionable character. I have been very little in the higher circles of life and formality always makes me run away.'<sup>67</sup> More common than personal insecurity were officers' comments on other officers losing their comrades' good will through ill-manners. Exactly how ill-manners were defined is difficult to determine, and standards of behaviour varied between regiments. The broad term 'civility', however, may be used to understand the limits of manners. As noted by Carter, 'civility', like 'politeness', was a vague term which could be applied to any number of social situations, but which was routinely used to describe decorum.<sup>68</sup> In the context of the officer corps, civility appears to have been understood as behaviour which did not offend associates or companions, and it was this which formed the basis of acceptance by other officers. In his memoir, George Wood lamented his own behaviour as a dissolute ensign in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot, which he described as: 'officious, talkative, presumptuous and conceited.'<sup>69</sup> The need to avoid offence is borne out by contemporary accounts, which also highlight how officers had to be mindful of their extra-regimental reputation. Having just dined with the Duke of York while in the Low Countries in 1794, Lieutenant David Powell of the 14<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons was taken aback at the disrespectful comments made by some officers of the Guards, who spoke: 'pretty freely ... & I if I recollect right, even threw imputation on the Duke, at whose table they were sitting.'<sup>70</sup> As will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, civil conduct was of sufficient importance to the officer corps' cohesion that officers could be brought before a general courts martial on the charge of 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman' after insulting a comrade, or being challenged to fight a duel by the offended officer.

Officers also shared in a recreational culture that revolved around polite accomplishments. To the eighteenth-century mind, polite accomplishments and their attendant sociability, such as dancing or connoisseurship of art, literature, and landscapes, was central to refining individuals into the 'polite gentleman.'<sup>71</sup> Historians have recently demonstrated the complimentary relationship between polite accomplishment and military identities. Gavin Daly, for example, has revealed how, during the Peninsular War, British officers cultivated and demonstrated their

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<sup>67</sup> National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter, NRS) GD 139/369, Captain John Sinclair, 16 Jul. 1812.

<sup>68</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>69</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern Officer*, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter, NLI), Ms. 1577, Lieutenant David Powell, 'Some Account of a Campaign in 1794', pp. 170-1.

<sup>71</sup> Klein 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', pp. 873-7; John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), pp. 102-7. For dancing, sociability, and refinement, Anne Bloomfield and Ruth Watts, 'Pedagogue of the Dance: The Dancing Master as Educator in the Long Eighteenth Century', *History of Education*, 37 (2008), pp. 605-18.



identities as polite travellers, particularly when in Madrid.<sup>72</sup> Here, officers found ample opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishment and taste by attending balls and dances, visiting museums and art galleries, or by walking the Prado or through Madrid's public gardens in the company of local women.<sup>73</sup> For junior officers, accomplishments were central to facilitating interaction between strangers, particularly other officers. Recalling his time in garrison on Gibraltar, a location not famed for its quality of society, John Patterson of the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot still spent his leisure time dancing or reading books from the garrison library, and noted: 'It is absurd to say, where so many military men congregate together, that any quarter can be dull. Let them but get into the remotest corner of the earth, and they will strike up something among themselves that will drive care away.'<sup>74</sup> Writing to his uncle, Captain Edward Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons believed that polite accomplishment compensated for a lack of close connections:

I must highly recommend a knowledge of music, dancing and drawing, or *at least* some two of these accomplishments...When once a soldier becomes a prey to ennui it is all over with him, he is first sorrowful and then sick, but a man will always get ennui unless he has the power of amusing himself ... a soldier is continually changing his society ... Put a man among strangers and they cannot know his sterling virtues, they can only judge him by his manners and appearance. If he can sing and dance he makes nine out of ten friends.<sup>75</sup>

Although rare, officers who felt they did not display the characteristics of polite refinement could experience nervousness. Attending an 1812 ball in Madrid, 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain William Webber of the Royal Artillery recorded his discomfort in his journal: 'I summoned resolution enough to dance. Luckily there was a crowd and my awkward manner of waltzing was unperceived except by my partner and she thought I was careless but not incapable of dancing properly.'<sup>76</sup> As highlighted by McCormack, dancing was of particular importance to eighteenth-century military masculinities, as dancing was seen to inculcate the manners and deportment expected of an

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<sup>72</sup> Gavin Daly, 'Liberators and Tourists: British Soldiers in Madrid during the Peninsular War', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, ed. Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 117-35.

<sup>73</sup> Daly, 'Liberators and Tourists', pp. 124-8.

<sup>74</sup> John Patterson, *Camps and Quarters, or, Scenes and Impressions of Military Life*, Vol. 1 (London, 1840), pp. 199-200.

<sup>75</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812*, ed. Julia Page (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), pp. 153-5.

<sup>76</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain William Webber, journal, 15 Oct. 1812, in William Webber, *With the Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery*, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London, 1991), p. 89.

officer.<sup>77</sup> Webber's concern at his 'awkward manner', therefore, may signify wider concerns about his place within the army, rather than just passing embarrassment at his lack of prowess in the ballroom.

Junior officers also engaged in gentlemanly pursuits that were more closely associated with the country squire than the sophisticated, urban 'polite gentleman'.<sup>78</sup> Sportsmanship was a prominent feature of the social life of the British officer corps during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and officer accounts are replete with accounts of horse racing, fishing, shooting, and hunting.<sup>79</sup> Officers with means could maintain extensive hunting equipment, even on campaign. In the Peninsula, 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain Charles Dansey of the Royal Artillery visited his brother and fellow army officer, and described his equipment in a letter home to their mother: 'Hen[ry] was in capital condition for taking the field, having one horse, 3 mules, 2 greyhounds, 2 pointers & 2 guns besides a patent flying breakfast equipage for getting ready the breakfast table on horseback.'<sup>80</sup> Officers with less money could still go hunting and fishing in their leisure time: Lieutenant Thomas Henry Browne of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot recorded one expedition in North America where he and a fellow subaltern shot partridge, and caught: 'more Trout, than we could possibly carry.'<sup>81</sup> These pursuits, however, had a mixed relationship with politeness. As shown by David Itzkowitz, mid-eighteenth-century criticisms of hunting focused on the rusticity of hunters themselves, by contrasting the 'bumpkin' hunter with the urban sophisticate.<sup>82</sup> William Stafford, furthermore, has revealed that late-Georgian polite critiques of hunting could also, occasionally, attack the cruelty of killing for sport.<sup>83</sup> Despite these criticisms, hunting was increasingly seen as a fashionable pastime by the late-eighteenth century, while the 1761 Game Laws provided an air of social exclusivity to the hunt.<sup>84</sup> Being an officer provided the opportunity for aspirational individuals to partake in a pastime that was unavailable to them in Britain. Hennell wrote to his brothers from Madrid in 1812: 'There is a great quantity of game within a league of this place. An officer belonging to us one day shot a deer & five braces of

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<sup>77</sup> McCormack, 'Dance and Drill', pp. 323-7.

<sup>78</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', p. 137.

<sup>79</sup> Antony Brett-James provided numerous examples of officers' sporting activities during the Napoleonic Wars. Antony Brett-James, *Life in Wellington's Army* (London, 1972), pp. 195-213.

<sup>80</sup> Second Captain Charles Dansey, 30 May 1813, in Charles Dansey, *The Letters of Second Captain Charles Dansey, Royal Artillery, 1806-1813*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2006), p. 67.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), pp. 80-1.

<sup>82</sup> David C. Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege: A Social History of English Foxhunting, 1753-1885* (Hassocks, 1977), pp. 135-6.

<sup>83</sup> William Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late-Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*', *History*, 93 (2008), pp. p. 61.

<sup>84</sup> G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 96-8; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT, 2014), pp. 173-4; Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2005), p. 72.

pheasants-no game laws here.’<sup>85</sup> Describing hunting excursions outside of Paris in 1815, Quartermaster William Surtees of the 95th Foot relished the opportunity, noting: ‘This would be looked upon almost as poaching in England, but in France it was otherwise.’<sup>86</sup> As a model for day-to-day interaction between British officers, therefore, politeness was pre-eminent. Polite sociability gave officers a point of commonality, providing common ground and smoothing interaction.

### ***Subverting Politeness***

Junior officers’ behaviour was not universally ‘polite’, and there are limitations to using politeness as a model for understanding British officers’ behaviour. The divergences between polite ideals, and lived practices, have recently been the subject of historical inquiry. Carter has demonstrated how men who strove to match polite ideals, could consciously or unconsciously divert from polite practice.<sup>87</sup> William Stafford emphasised the plurality of gentlemanly masculinities during the late-Georgian period, and revealed how politeness existed alongside other, less-refined masculinities.<sup>88</sup> Davison highlighted how politeness was contextual, and demonstrated how polite men lapsed into less respectable conduct when in familiar company.<sup>89</sup> As demonstrated throughout this chapter, junior officers were keen to style themselves as ‘polite gentlemen’ when interacting with each other; however, self-identifying as such did not necessarily limit their conduct to behaviour that could be described as ‘polite’. Junior officers can be found engaging in behaviours that were out of step with polite expectations, such as gambling, violence, and destructive conduct, while the officer corps had a well-earned reputation for drunkenness and licentiousness.<sup>90</sup> These behaviours exemplify how lived practices were not uniformly ‘polite’, and highlight the rough underbelly of the British officer corps. Preparing to board his transport to the Peninsula, Blackman assured his parents that he would not emulate his comrades by gambling:

I have not, I give you my word of honour, touched a card since I left you. Tho’ during our march down to Portsmouth and ever since, most of the officers have played every night, having nothing to do. I have bought Opian’s poems to amuse me when

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<sup>85</sup> Lieutenant George Hennell, 19 Sep. 1812, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 49.

<sup>86</sup> William Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years in the Rifle Brigade* (London, 1833), p. 412.

<sup>87</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 163-201.

<sup>88</sup> Stafford, ‘Gentlemanly Masculinities’, pp. 47-68.

<sup>89</sup> Davison, ‘Occasional Politeness and Gentlemen’s Laughter’, pp. 921-45.

<sup>90</sup> Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT, 2013), pp. 175-218; Robert Shoemaker, ‘Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Social History*, 2 (2001), p. 201; Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. 247-50; Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies*, pp. 338-49.

on board, and when at Lymington I had books from the library, and it is my intention not to play at Cards at all. I know the rest of the Officers will be playing all the voyage.<sup>91</sup>

Similarly, Hennell, a devout dissenting Protestant, contrasted his 'prudence' with the habitual drunkenness of his fellow officers.<sup>92</sup> That Blackman and Hennell criticised their comrades for their behaviour, is suggestive as to how behaviour in the officer corps could be an affront to polite sensibilities.

Junior officers were capable of more extreme behaviour, as evidenced by the findings of general courts martial. These records are suggestive as to the range of impolite behaviours junior officers could display. Furthermore, the incidents which saw officers brought to trial highlight the parameters of acceptable gentlemanly conduct within the officer corps.<sup>93</sup> All of the following officers were tried under the charge of 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman', or a charge of similar phrasing. As noted by Arthur Gilbert, the vagueness of this charge made military law flexible and allowed for regiments to regulate their officers' behaviour depending on shifting values.<sup>94</sup> By emphasising officers' gentlemanliness, therefore, this charge provides an outline of what officers expected of each other as gentlemen.<sup>95</sup> Conversely, these records reveal only part of the picture, as some regiments almost certainly turned a blind eye to misbehaviour, or resolved crimes internally, while other transgressions may have gone unnoticed. Violence and destructive behaviour are a feature of general courts martial records. In April 1809, two lieutenants were brought to trial in Stafford for: 'appearing in a state of intoxication, raising a riot and disturbance, and engaging in an affray in the public street.'<sup>96</sup> As demonstrated previously, the mess was instrumental in fostering civil interaction between officers. Courts martial records suggest, however, that the heady atmosphere of the mess also created the preconditions for dissolute behaviour. In Kingston in 1806, Lieutenant Richard Gardner of the 54<sup>th</sup> Foot was brought to trial for insulting and assaulting the paymaster of the 55<sup>th</sup> Foot in the officers' mess: 'by calling him a "Puppy", and declaring he would pull his nose, and for disgracefully boxing with the said Paymaster ... [by] kneeling upon and beating him, whilst on the floor, until forcibly separated.'<sup>97</sup> Not content with assaulting each other, junior officers were also capable of acts of violence against local populations. In the Peninsula, a sense of cultural

<sup>91</sup> NAM 1988-07-52, Ensign John Lucie Blackman, 12 Feb. 1812.

<sup>92</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 6 Jul. 1813, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 97.

<sup>93</sup> McCormack, *Embodying the Militia*, p. 116.

<sup>94</sup> Arthur Gilbert, 'Law and Honour among Eighteenth-Century British Army Officers', *Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), p. 76.

<sup>95</sup> McCormack, *Embodying the Militia*, p. 116.

<sup>96</sup> Charles James, *A Collection of the Charges, Opinions, and Sentences of General Courts Martial, As Published by Authority for the Year 1795 to the Present Time* (London, 1820), p. 305.

<sup>97</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, p. 248.

superiority and anti-clericalism could manifest itself in acts of destruction, violence, and theft against the Portuguese and Spanish.<sup>98</sup> In extreme cases, few things were off limits. In Portugal in 1811, six junior officers of the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot were brought to trial and three cashiered for a range of offences, which included: 'being concerned in an act of violence ... on the dead body of a Portuguese priest ... by cutting the face of the corpse, stripping it, and offering other indignities to it.'<sup>99</sup>

Junior officers' motivations in these instances are not entirely clear. It is possible that a combination of boredom and alcohol played a part, as officers who were fed up with military life acted out in frustration. It is also possible that there were officers who could not match their comrades at polite accomplishments, which left them as social outcasts. In a letter to his uncle, Cocks contrasted officers who could sing and dance with those who lacked accomplishment. Cocks state that accomplished officers passed:

their evenings gaily and pleasantly ... and rise in the morning with a light heart and a clear head ready to set to work at his duty; while his unharmonious comrade avoids society because he cannot excel in it, perhaps gets drunk for want of something to do, collects a quantity of black bile and turns out in the morning with a gloomy face and a grumbling air, enough to frighten the very sun behind a cloud.<sup>100</sup>

Carter has revealed how concepts of politeness did not go unchallenged during the eighteenth century, and identified an important undercurrent of alternative models of masculinity, such as the 'blackguards', who rejected polite ideals and instead stressed anti-civility and violence as markers of manhood.<sup>101</sup> In the case of junior army officers it is possible that being on the outer of polite society saw officers embrace similar types of behaviour as 'blackguards'. In this sense, the impolite behaviour of some officers may have constituted a revolt against broadly accepted standards of politeness.

### ***Internal Social Divides***

As emphasised by Klein, the ideals of politeness stressed ease of interaction between individuals of disparate social standing, reducing the impact of social distinctions, without creating equality.<sup>102</sup> As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the enabling capacity of politeness was

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<sup>98</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 115-21.

<sup>99</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges, Opinions, and Sentences of General Courts Martial*, p. 366.

<sup>100</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 155.

<sup>101</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 135-7.

<sup>102</sup> Klein 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', p. 879.

crucial in fostering regimental cohesion and integrating junior officers into the officer corps. The social divide that existed between officers in elite cavalry and Foot Guards regiments, and those who served in less celebrated line regiments, however, suggests that the capacity of polite ideals to bridge social distinctions between regiments was ultimately limited. Concepts of what constituted 'polite refinement' differed between officers of elite social backgrounds, and more humble officers in line regiments. As noted by several historians of eighteenth-century Britain, the British elite expressed their status through dominance of political patronage, a culture of conspicuous consumption, and through local leadership and public displays of paternalism.<sup>103</sup> Officers of elite background expressed their cultural and social identities in similar ways. The social exclusivity associated with elite cavalry and Foot Guards regiments fostered an elevated sense of 'polite refinement', intrinsic to which was the projection of personal wealth. As noted by Maxine Berg, consumption was central to elite and middle-class identities during the eighteenth century, as expenditure on fashionable items signified status, refinement, and taste.<sup>104</sup> Historical accounts of eighteenth-century consumption have traditionally focused on women as consumers; however, as revealed by Margot Finn, men could also be active consumers.<sup>105</sup>

Consumption, therefore, was a feature of all officers' polite identities. Officers were responsible for purchasing their own uniform and campaign equipment, the contents of which reflected their status as gentlemen as much as it did military necessity. En route to Holland during the 1809 Walcheren campaign, Keep wrote to his mother that he was relieved to own a portmanteau, as it was: 'extremely serviceable to me ... I don't know what I would do without it, having no other place to deposit combs, towels, brushes and all the etceteras in.'<sup>106</sup> Lieutenant Charles Boothby of the Royal Engineers wrote to his sister Louisa in 1809 that he had: 'lost one of my first comforts, a new blue, patent, silver-mounted, morocco writing-case; all my letter-paper, pens, ink, letters.'<sup>107</sup> What distinguished officers in the Guards was the amount of extra equipment, clothing, and food they carried with them on campaign, and the money spent to

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<sup>103</sup> John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 406-8; H.T. Dickinson, 'The British Constitution', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* ed. H.T. Dickinson (Oxford, 2002), pp. 14-5; Maura A. Henry, 'The Making of Elite Culture', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* pp. 313-4; Black, *A Subject for Taste*, pp. 41-82; J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986), p. 337; Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford, 1991), p. 367.

<sup>104</sup> Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 205-6. See also: Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 68-71; Klein 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', pp. 882-4.

<sup>105</sup> Margot Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution', *Social History*, 25 (2000), pp. 133-42.

<sup>106</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 17 Jul. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 37.

<sup>107</sup> Lieutenant Charles Boothby, 8 Jul. 1809, in Charles Boothby, *Under England's Flag, from 1804 to 1809: The Memoirs, Diary, and Correspondence of Charles Boothby, Captain of Royal Engineers* (London, 1900), p. 262.

acquire these goods. Judge Advocate-General Larpent criticised the amount of equipment carried by Guards officers in the Peninsula: 'the present establishment of the Guards is absolutely ridiculous. Every subaltern has his two or three horses, and his three or four mules, as much as any staff-officer ought to have. He carries his bed out to the guard-house, or picket, and has his canteen fit to give a dinner, and every luxury &c.'<sup>108</sup> Rees Gronow, a subaltern with the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards, described the replete kitchen of Ensign Dawson, an aristocratic comrade, who maintained a staff of cooks and servants in the Peninsula, and brought out: 'innumerable hampers of wine, liquers, hams, potted meat, and other good things ... no one was so hospitable or lived so magnificently.'<sup>109</sup> In a letter home, Mills emphasised the importance of consumption to maintaining a certain standard of living on campaign: 'The greatest luxury here is to have all your little comforts about you – any place becomes tolerable and you are perfectly independent ... the advice I would give anybody coming out ... would be precisely the reverse of what was given me – I would say bring out as many little comforts as you can.'<sup>110</sup>

The accounts of junior officers from the Guards are replete with details of how they spent their money. Bridgeman wrote home from the Peninsula describing a ball his regiment hosted in the house of Oporto's governor, complete with dancing, supper, toasting, and gambling.<sup>111</sup> This ball was a conscious display of the wealth of Guards' officers: Bridgeman claimed 52 subscriptions were raised, to a total of 2,340 Spanish dollars.<sup>112</sup> Nor was this an isolated incident. Mills recounted a ball the officers of the Coldstream gave to Spanish elites at Puebla, where the regiment's officers paid for two temporary huts built for the occasion, one sixty feet by twenty for dancing, with additional space for the German band hired by the regiment.<sup>113</sup> Such extravagant displays of wealth are exclusive to Guards officers' accounts; however, the difference between Guards and line officers can also be seen in everyday expenses, such as clothing. While Blackman of the Coldstream Guards, the son of a governor of the Bank of England, wrote to his parents requesting they purchase him two pairs of blue stockings before he departed for the Peninsula, as: 'whenever an Officer is invited to dinner, which of course I shall be at Lisbon, or whenever a General Officer invites you to his table, we always go in that dress', officers of lesser means often complained of their ability to cover the costs of basic

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<sup>108</sup> Francis Seymour Larpent, 11 Dec. 1813, in Francis Seymour Larpent, *The Private Journal of F.S. Larpent, Esq., Judge Advocate General of the British Forces in the Peninsula*, Vol. II, ed. George Larpent (London, 1853), p. 189.

<sup>109</sup> Rees Gronow, *Reminiscences of Captain Gronow*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (London, 1862), p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> Ensign John Mills to mother, 20 Aug. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 58.

<sup>111</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 13 Jun. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, pp. 116-8.

<sup>112</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 13 Jun. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 118.

<sup>113</sup> Ensign John Mills, 11 Jun. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 40.

uniform.<sup>114</sup> Required to purchase a new coat, cap, epaulette, sabre, and grey overalls, Keep complained to his mother about his vulnerability to changes in uniform: 'All this is a sad interruption to schemes of economy, and you may suppose what difficulties I shall be under for some time now.'<sup>115</sup>

Junior officers in the Guards, especially, prided themselves on their refinement. Ensign John Rous, an aristocratic officer of the Coldstream Guards, recommended to his father that Rous' brother join the Guards Brigade, citing their reputation and popularity with Wellington: 'I have mentioned the advantage of the guards ... Our Brigade, which is called *the Brigade*, is much the greatest favourite with the Peer.'<sup>116</sup> Ensign John Mills, a gentry officer also of the Coldstream Guards, bragged in a letter home: 'We are favourites with his Lordship; who always makes a point of inviting a certain number of us to dinner ... of course the others are jealous of us.'<sup>117</sup> Crucially, this heightened sense of gentlemanliness was felt to distinguish Guards officers from line officers, who some elite officers saw as failing to realise polite ideals. Advising his family when best to sell his brother's commission in the 58<sup>th</sup> Foot, Mills ridiculed the rustic manners of the Irish officers of the 58<sup>th</sup> in an 1812 letter home: 'You have a much better chance of selling the commission in the 58<sup>th</sup> whilst the regiment is on service ... The officers are chiefly Irish Gentlemen ... and persons of moderate fortune who have been so elegantly educated are shy of associating with them.'<sup>118</sup> Describing his regular dinners of fish and turkey while in the Peninsula in a letter home, Rous pointedly added: 'This is merely to give you an idea of the living of the Guards when compared with that of the Line, who live on a pound of tough beef and a half of bread ... commonly called ration, a thing not known with us when in quarters.'<sup>119</sup>

The displays of wealth and refinement made by officers in these aristocratic regiments could be interpreted by junior officers in less celebrated line regiments as ostentatious haughtiness: Keep, the son of a war office bureaucrat, wrote to his mother that 'aristocratically inclined' officers of his regiment were keen to join the cavalry, as: 'though expensive [it] is considered the most dashing service, and is generally selected by young men of good fortune and family. The consequence is that officers of the infantry hold themselves in very low estimation comparatively.'<sup>120</sup> Describing the rustic cooking utensils he and other line officers carried in the

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<sup>114</sup> Ensign John Lucie Blackman, 24 Feb. 1812, in John Lucie Blackman, *'It All Culminated at Hougoumont': The Letters of Captain John Lucie Blackman, Coldstream Guards, 1812-15*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2009), p. 13.

<sup>115</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep to mother, 14 Feb. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 78.

<sup>116</sup> Ensign John Rous, 10 Dec. 1812, in John Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsular War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1814*, ed. Gareth Glover (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), p. 42.

<sup>117</sup> Ensign John Mills, 27 Aug. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 64.

<sup>118</sup> Ensign John Mills, 20 May 1812, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 146.

<sup>119</sup> Ensign John Rous, 11 Jan. 1813, in Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 48.

<sup>120</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 6 Apr. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, pp. 80-1.



Peninsula, Lieutenant Robert Blakeney of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot added: 'Hussars, lancers and other cavalry captains would doubtless sooner starve than contaminate their aristocratic stomachs with viands, however exquisite, served on such plebeian utensils.'<sup>121</sup> This sense of inferiority dovetailed with established anti-aristocratic discourses. During the eighteenth-century, the relationship between consumption and society was the matter of continued debate.<sup>122</sup> As shown by J.G.A. Pocock, classical republicanism was prominent in eighteenth-century political discourse, which employed terms such as 'virtue', 'corruption', and luxury' against opponents.<sup>123</sup> 'Excessive' refinement, embodied by the fashion conscious figure of the fop, was portrayed as effeminising.<sup>124</sup> Such criticisms were applied to the aristocracy, whose luxury and over-refinement were alleged to have filtered down the ranks of society, sapping the military of its courage, valour, and strength.<sup>125</sup> Drawing on these discourses, some officers portrayed Guards officers as indolent, seemingly drawing connections between their ostentatious personal habits and a neglect of duty. In his memoir, Blakeney savaged a 'patrician band' of 'Belemites', or officers who avoided combat in the Peninsula and lingered at the city of Belem. In doing so, Blakeney made specific reference to a classical example in:

Some were unwillingly kept back from debility of constitution or through wounds, but a large majority were inflicted with a disease which, baffling the skill of learned doctors, call for a remedy far different from that of medical treatment ... the greater number of its members had never seen nor heard a shot fired ... far more cautious indeed than the smooth-faced Roman patricians who fled from the slingers at Pharsalia.<sup>126</sup>

Having attempted to ascertain information about an advanced picket from a Guards' officer, Crowe was surprised to find the officer ignorant about where his men were, as he slept away from his men on a sofa. For Crowe, this encounter: 'fully confirmed the opinion throughout the army, that the Guardsmen are by their commissions, officers, they are personally brave as chivalrous gentlemen ought to be; but they are not soldiers!!'<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, pp. 209-10.

<sup>122</sup> Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>123</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 143-56.

<sup>124</sup> For a discussion of over-refinement and the fop, see, Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 128-52.

<sup>125</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 186-7.

<sup>126</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, pp. 281-2.

<sup>127</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 9 Mar. 1814, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 239.

As argued by Kennedy, condescension on the part of elite officers suggests that the association between the officer corps and gentlemanliness could be tenuous, even for officers who were not associated with the ranks.<sup>128</sup> As Keep's observations suggest, line officers could certainly feel a diminished sense of their own gentlemanliness as a result of elite haughtiness. Rather than viewing the social divisions between officers as apportion or otherwise of gentlemanliness, these distinctions serve to highlight how there were degrees of gentlemanliness within the officer corps, and how politeness did not obviate social distinctions. Crowe, for example, considered himself a gentleman, as evidenced by his emphasis on gentlemanly language and his disdain for former rankers and volunteers, yet still expressed concern about the ostentatious display of Guards officers. The polite culture of the officer corps, reflected in the leisure pursuits engaged in by officers, the sociability of the regimental mess, and the exclusion of officers who had been associated with the ranks allowed officers to style and construct self-identities as polite gentlemen, yet there remained important nuances in gentlemanly identities. While officers from all regiments likely considered their personal tastes to reflect those of the 'polite gentlemen', the distinctions perceived by elite and non-elite officers alike suggest that there were differing conceptions of 'polite refinement' within the officer corps. Officers of elite social background who proliferated in the celebrated Guards and cavalry regiments appear to have viewed politeness as the ability to project refinement through conscious displays of wealth and status. For their part, officers from lesser social and regimental backgrounds appear to have valued restraint and taste as principles of 'polite refinement', as evidenced by their criticisms of elite officers as corrupted by their luxury. Within the officer corps, it would appear, there was no single concept of 'politeness'.

### ***Knights and Rakes***

So far, this chapter has focused largely on how politeness informed relations between men, and highlighted how being considered a polite gentleman was key to integrating into the officer corps. Junior officers' relationship with, and attitudes towards women highlight the ambiguities and contradictions within junior officers' polite identities. On the one hand, officers' dealings with women highlight junior officers' polite aspirations. The capacity to mingle easily in mixed-sex company, and the ability to please women was central to 'polite gentlemanliness'. Polite theorists stressed the importance of male interaction with women to polite refinement: interaction between the sexes was seen to curb male behaviour, while inculcating elegance and a favourable deportment.<sup>129</sup> As noted by Kennedy, the near absence of women from the army

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<sup>128</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', p. 131.

<sup>129</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 66-70.

presented a roadblock for officers keen to exercise this aspect of their polite identity.<sup>130</sup> Junior officers were adept at making connections with local communities, allowing them to associate with female society. Keep attended numerous balls while stationed in Winchester, noting to his mother that a main attraction was that this was: 'where the Belles of Winchester congregate.'<sup>131</sup> While serving in Canada during 1813, Lieutenant John Le Couteur of the 104<sup>th</sup> Foot was keen to display his accomplishment to local women: 'My fair friends sent me numbers of novels ... some of these I read aloud of an evening, to a coterie of sweet girls, three or four, whom the Lady permitted to listen to me.'<sup>132</sup> Returning to the same house in the following days, Le Couteur noted in his journal: 'What happy campaigning days for a young Soldier of fortune ... to be in the cheering Society of an amiable circle of young gentlewomen, all soundly educated in the useful pursuits of life, all intimate by relationships, with the lively frankness of American manner, all of singular piety with perfect cheerfulness.'<sup>133</sup>

Interactions with women also reveal how junior officers constructed identities as polite 'men of feeling', as they expressed sympathy for female victims of conflict. G.J Barker-Benfield and Stafford have demonstrated how affection and sympathy towards women were key components of polite sensibility.<sup>134</sup> Sharpened by a sense of cultural similarity with the Danish people, British officers who visited Copenhagen after its 1807 bombardment by the British expressed their sympathy for the victims.<sup>135</sup> After visiting the ruined city, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot wrote in a letter home:

It is impossible for my feeble pen to describe the horrid and distressing scene that presented itself to my view when I surveyed that part of the City where the operations of the bombardment had been chiefly observed. The countenances of the inhabitants bore strong marks of their calamitous situation, and I do not blush to declare that I felt most poignantly their pitiable case.<sup>136</sup>

The bombardment's impact on women and children left a particular impact. Harrison was distressed when a Danish man informed him that his wife and child died during the bombardment, and told Harrison that the British could: 'do me no other injury.'<sup>137</sup> Visiting a Danish noble, Second Captain Charles Pasley of the Royal Engineers was appalled to learn that

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<sup>130</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', p. 138.

<sup>131</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Nov. 1808, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 21.

<sup>132</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, 21 Oct. 1813, in John Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days: The War of 1812 Journal of Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 104<sup>th</sup> Foot*, ed. Donald Graves (Ottawa, 1993), pp. 145-6.

<sup>133</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, 28 Oct. 1813, in Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>134</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. 247-50; Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities', pp. 55-8.

<sup>135</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>136</sup> NAM 1980-08-56, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison, 20 Nov. 1807.

<sup>137</sup> NAM 1980-08-56, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison, 20 Nov. 1807.

the noble: 'had his daughter's leg carried off by a shell. Of three of the most beautiful young ladies in Copenhagen two were killed and one wounded – melancholy to think that war should have anything to do with women.'<sup>138</sup>

Michèle Cohen has identified a chivalric revival during the late-eighteenth century, which encouraged men to combine martial ability with sympathy, by acting in the defence of women and winning their affections through heroic deeds.<sup>139</sup> Such notions would have likely appealed to men who identified as polite 'men of feeling'. Stafford has demonstrated how the expectation that Georgian gentlemen display sympathy also encouraged a sense of 'patriarchal protectiveness' towards objects of sympathy.<sup>140</sup> In her study of British soldier-memoirists portrayal of Portuguese nuns, Jennine Hurl-Eamon demonstrated how officers' sympathy for, affairs with, and attempts to liberate cloistered nuns during the Peninsular War reflected memoirists' identities as men of polite sensibility and chivalry.<sup>141</sup> The chivalric connection between love and war made the military the perfect setting for junior officers to style themselves as men of feeling and chivalric gentlemen. Describing a brawl between two officers to his mother, one hoping to keep women within the barracks, the other hoping to exile them, Keep made specific reference to chivalry: 'never was an occasion more suited to chivalric deeds, one striving to imprison, the other to liberate the fair supplicants.'<sup>142</sup> Departure scenes in junior officers' memoirs leant themselves to chivalric imagery. Memoirists focused on female spectators who massed to see the army leaving Britain. Blakeney placed women at the centre of his description of the army departing for the 1809 Walcheren campaign, and played on the chivalric relationship between love, manliness, and bravery:

Many beauteous fair, whose smiles were rendered yet more brilliant by the intrusive tear, waved their handkerchiefs in the breeze to the fond objects of their fixed regard, who responded with silent but steadfast gaze, burning with the two noblest passions which inspire the breast of man – love and glory.<sup>143</sup>

It was in the Peninsula where junior officers' chivalric identities found their greatest expression. As highlighted by Daly, the late-eighteenth-century Gothic and chivalric revival in Britain provided a model for British views of the Portuguese and Spanish people, such as in the

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<sup>138</sup> The British Library, London (hereafter, BL) Add. Ms. 41975, Captain Charles Pasley, 13 Sep. 1807, 'The Pasley Papers: Vol. XV'.

<sup>139</sup> Michèle Cohen, "'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), pp. 319-21.

<sup>140</sup> Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities', pp. 55-8.

<sup>141</sup> Jennine Hurl-Eamon, 'Habits of Seduction: Accounts of Portuguese Nuns in British Officers' Peninsular War Memoirs', *The Historical Journal*, 58 (2015), pp. 736-46.

<sup>142</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 10 Sep. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 92.

<sup>143</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 128.

1812 Madrid triumph.<sup>144</sup> Accounts of the liberation focus on the affection the British received from the women of Madrid for liberating them from the French. Officers elevated their position in this triumphal procession, emphasising their place on horseback, evoking similarities with horse-mounted knights. Browne wrote in his journal: 'the stirrups of the officers, as they rode along, were taken hold of & they were gently stopped to be saluted with every possible expression of good will and joy.'<sup>145</sup> In particular, the focused attention of women inflated officers' sense of exultation. Hennell wrote to his brother: 'The inhabitants are ready to pull the officers off their horses with joy ... The lady at the window, immediately she sees you, touches the one next to her to look and they are all ready the moment you make a slight inclination of the head & smile, to return it more cordially.'<sup>146</sup>

As suggested by the above, attracting and seducing women were features of junior officers' interactions with women. Sex and military service were inherently bound. Although the British army did not explicitly link martial exploits with sexual conquest in the way Napoleon's army did, sex was still important to British military masculinity.<sup>147</sup> Scott Hughes Myerly has highlighted how uniforms flattered the male figure, encouraging the view of military uniforms as sexually attractive, while Louise Carter has revealed the complex relationship between the military and sexual attraction in her study of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century phenomena of 'scarlet fever', which included the elevation of the soldier as an object of lust.<sup>148</sup> While the overlapping importance of sympathy for women in ideals of polite and chivalric masculinity ensures that the two were closely related, the officer corps also embraced a libertine masculinity which conflicted with polite ideals. As emphasised by Hurl-Eamon in her study of marriage in the eighteenth-century British army, the army had a culture of 'tomcatting', which celebrated sexual conquest as a defining feature of masculinity.<sup>149</sup> While the culture of libertine masculinity was strong within the army, womanising was also a feature of civilian Georgian masculinity, even for otherwise polite men.<sup>150</sup> As shown by Erin Mackie and M. John Cardwell, the rake was an enduring influence on British masculinities during the eighteenth-century, with literary rakes portrayed in a stylish and even military light, planning their sexual

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<sup>144</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>145</sup> Browne, *Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 177.

<sup>146</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 19 Aug. 1812, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 38.

<sup>147</sup> Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 123-34.

<sup>148</sup> Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars to the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 53-66; Louise Carter, 'Scarlet Fever: Female Enthusiasm for Men in Uniform, 1780-1815', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool, 2014), pp. 155-82.

<sup>149</sup> Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 95-111.

<sup>150</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 195-6.

conquests in the way a general plans a battle.<sup>151</sup> Especially within cavalry regiments, whose uniforms were amongst the most elaborate in the army, officers placed a premium on their ability to attract and seduce women. Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons complained in a letter to his cousin about the frostiness of the 'contemptible' women at Falmouth who rejected his advances:

If you address them in a morning they are shocked at the idea of walking at night and if you speak to them in the dark, Good Lord, they set up their backs like a cat worried by a terrier. What can be the cause of this astonishing degeneracy I am unable to ascertain, and I know not whether any cold-blooded Sea Monster formerly haunted these shores, daily demanding the sacrifice of a virgin ... This fact, only, have I been able to ascertain for sure, that I have lived in celibacy since my arrival. Dreadful.<sup>152</sup>

Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars noted how Spanish nuns were attracted to the distinctive blue uniforms of the hussars, 'I made them comprehend that I was an Hussar and that in England we are the pride of the fair sex, which they were not at all astonished at. They said, they like us better than those they had seen from their windows in red coats.'<sup>153</sup> Woodberry's emphasis on the sexual appeal of the Hussars is suggestive to a strong rakish culture in these regiments, which he attributed to their comparatively showy uniforms.

The nomadism of campaign life appears to have encouraged officers to view themselves as freed of the moral constraints of polite society.<sup>154</sup> Woodberry emphasised the temporary nature of his own affairs in the Peninsula, stating that passion for Spanish women: 'only lasts while in sight of the object ... I actively think nothing of telling a dozen females here the same tale.'<sup>155</sup> Describing he and his fellow officers 'marshalling' Spanish women to dances in the Peninsula, Captain John Kincaid of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles reflected that he and his comrades: 'frequently incurred the most indelible disgrace among the better orders of our indiscriminate collection ... we were only birds of passage, it was a matter of perfect indifference to us what they thought.'<sup>156</sup> In this regard, junior officers' conduct reflected that of another set of young eighteenth-century gentlemen. The 'Grand Tour' was seen as an important tool for rendering young British men

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<sup>151</sup> Erin Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD, 2009), pp. 35-70; M. John Cardwell, 'The Rake as Military Strategist: *Clarissa* and Eighteenth-Century Warfare', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 19 (2006), pp. 153-80.

<sup>152</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 14 Feb. 1809, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 21.

<sup>153</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 3 Jul. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 165.

<sup>154</sup> Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>155</sup> George Woodberry, 13 Aug. 1813, quoted in *Charging against Napoleon: Diaries and Letters of Three Hussars, 1808-1815*, ed. Eric Hunt (Barnsley, 2001), p. 135.

<sup>156</sup> John Kincaid, *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade, in the Peninsula, France, and the Netherlands, from 1808 to 1815* (London, 1847), p. 154.

'polite'; however, it was also a period of 'sexual adventure', as travellers indulged their sexual appetites when set at liberty.<sup>157</sup> With close social and cultural ties to the classes who travelled on the 'Grand Tour', it is likely that junior officers were aware of the duality of character which travel allowed for, making for an easier reconciliation of their libertinism with their polite identities.

Rakishness was in direct conflict with polite principles, which stressed decorous conduct in the company of women as a means of refinement, and idealised the figure of the married, domesticated male.<sup>158</sup> As will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, the figure of the polite domestic male had a place within the army, as officers maintained relationships with wives and children, even on campaign. There were significant material barriers to junior officers marrying, with few officers possessing the means to maintain a family on campaign. Furthermore, officer corps could be disdainful of marriage. Marriage appears to have made an officer unpopular with his comrades, and there is the suggestion that being overly concerned with the domestic gave an officer the reputation of a killjoy. Patterson commented on an unpopular and unsociable major, 'Being comforted with the rather inconvenient appendage to the soldier, commonly called a wife ... he was but an honorary member of the mess.'<sup>159</sup> Similarly, Woodberry described a married friend pining over his wife as: 'the dullest young I ever knew' and labelled such a concern: 'a very frivolous one for a Hussar.'<sup>160</sup> Woodberry's account reveals conflicting ideas, as he regularly wrote longingly of a sweetheart in England, and hoped for: 'the good fortune to have a wife and children'.<sup>161</sup> Eventually deciding to retire from the army and marry, Blakiston pointed not just to the financial difficulties of marriage in the army, but to the wider culture of rakishness within the army. Blakiston suggested that officers with wives faced a 'delicate situation', forced to avoid the 'vulgarity' of officers, while the married couple were approached with trepidation by other officers, unsure of how to conduct themselves around a fellow officer's wife. Compounding these problems was Blakiston's belief that voracious officers would make sexual advances on a comrade's wife: 'There is the gallant Colonel to keep at a distance without giving offence, and ... there are puppies of all grades to hold at arm's length.'<sup>162</sup> Within these accounts, it is officers who did not participate in rakish conduct who are portrayed as the

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<sup>157</sup> Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (Beckenham, 1985), pp. 75-9; Michèle Cohen, 'The Grand Tour: Constructing the English Gentleman in Eighteenth-Century France', *History of Education*, 21 (1992), pp. 241-57.

<sup>158</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. 250-8; Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 97-9.

<sup>159</sup> Patterson, *Camps and Quarters*, p. 94.

<sup>160</sup> NAM 1967-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 17 Jun. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 141.

<sup>161</sup> George Woodberry, 23 Mar. 1814, quoted in *Charging against Napoleon*, p. 203.

<sup>162</sup> John Blakiston, *Twenty Years in Retirement*, Vol. I (London, 1836), pp. 8-9.

outlier. Together with a general lack of condemnation of womanising, this suggests that junior officers were not expected to adhere to polite norms as they related to interactions with women.

Politeness, therefore, is the most important model for understanding how junior officers related to each other, civil society, and women, and is revealing as to what standards of behaviour shaped their conduct. Displaying the manners and tastes of a 'polite gentleman' provided the social capital upon which junior officers based their status as leaders, and was essential in maintaining respect between officers. The regimental mess was important in inculcating the manners and behavioural style of the 'polite gentleman'. There were important nuances within the polite culture of the officer corps. Elite officers from aristocratically inclined regiments appear to have had a different concept of 'politeness' to their comrades in less celebrated line regiments, which could engender a degree of anti-aristocratic sentiment on the part of line officers. Furthermore, officers engaged in a range of behaviours which were in conflict with polite ideals, and could lapse into bouts of drunkenness and violence, while womanising was not condemned. These divergences, however, should not obscure the predominance of politeness in shaping the identities of British junior officers. Indeed, such was the centrality of politeness to junior officers' identities that politeness would influence many aspects of their wider identities, as will be explored in the following chapters.



## Chapter Three: Junior Officers and the ‘Profession of Arms’

Having served in the British army for nearly fifty years after being commissioned as an ensign in the 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot in March 1811, Major-General George Bell chose to dedicate his memoirs to: ‘The Young Officers of the British Army’. Bell advised them to: ‘Stick to your trade, young gentlemen. The wheel of fortune is always going round, and every spoke comes uppermost in its turn. I was SIXTEEN years a sub.’<sup>1</sup> Bell’s dedication reflects both how he defined himself in terms of his profession as well as the acknowledgement that the time he spent as a subaltern was frustrating and constricting, but also necessary for him to fulfil his ambitions. Bell’s identification as a ‘career’ officer who felt restricted by the subaltern’s position in the army was not unique, and was similar to sentiments expressed by many junior officers. The relationship between the British officer corps and the concept of ‘professionalism’ has usually been viewed in terms of training and battlefield effectiveness. Various studies have highlighted the patchy framework of professionalism which characterised the eighteenth-century British officer corps. Sylvia Frey argued that the purchase system, indifference to training and a lack of standardised training undermined the professionalism of British officers during the American War of Independence.<sup>2</sup> J.A. Houlding examined the training of the British army during the eighteenth century and found that there was no standardised procedure for officer training, with most officers joining the army with only self-driven reading from guidebooks as their only form of training.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, John Cookson suggested that the British officer corps of the Napoleonic Wars was professionalised only by dint of the army’s regular deployment, while Bruce Collins has demonstrated how experience, coupled with increasing standards of discipline and training, made British officers effective commanders.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter, however, will explore how junior officers identified with the army as a profession by exploring their professional motivations and aspirations, and how they saw these as best being fulfilled. Junior officers’ writings suggest that there was a strong identification with the military as a profession; yet this appears to have rarely begun out of any great professional or

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<sup>1</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier, During Fifty Years’ Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General C.B.* (London, 1867), p. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin TX, 1981), p. 97.

J.A. Houlding, *Fit For Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 272-73.

<sup>4</sup> John Cookson, ‘Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars’, in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 28; Bruce Collins, ‘Effectiveness and the British Officer Corps, 1793-1815’, in *Britain’s Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool, 2015), pp. 57-76.

careerist impulse. The first section explores enlistment and highlights the multitude of reasons why a prospective officer might seek out a commission. Military spectacle and the army's glamorous uniforms were important inducements for prospective officers. Often linking their commission to an idealised feeling of personal liberation, young officers often felt intoxicated by their newfound career. As will be explored in the second and third sections, once in the army, junior officers could find the suffering, subordination, and slow promotion rates within the army to be a source of disillusionment. This generated bitterness towards the system of promotion, which also became politicised as officers lacking in money or influence to gain rank adopted an anti-aristocratic identity which attacked wealthy and well-connected for their perceived corruption of the system of promotions. Despite this resentment, officers' reliance on their military career and a sense of masculine honour which encouraged stoic perseverance saw many officers develop a strong sense of careerism. Identification with the military as a career does not appear to have generated a uniform concept of 'professionalism'. The final section will explore the theme of professionalisation. The increasing professionalisation of the British officer corps throughout the eighteenth century existed in constant tension with the embedded British tradition of military amateurism. This tension ensured that concepts of what constituted 'professionalism' within the junior ranks of the officer corps varied. While junior officers could embrace the learning of drill as an important part of their professional identity, junior officers still valued a gentlemanly comportment and polite accomplishment as professional attributes, with these factors also encouraging a degree of self-education.

### ***Enlistment***

There was no single motivation that spurred prospective officers into obtaining a commission. Some officers suggested that they were enamoured with the pomp and spectacle of military life, which they saw as connoting a certain liberty from the constraints of adolescent life. Catriona Kennedy has explored the experiences of new officers joining their regiments and revealed how this could be a jarring experience for young officers, as they were separated from their families and immersed into the alien world of the regimental barracks.<sup>5</sup> This was certainly a feature of junior officers' first steps into the army; however, there was also a celebratory dimension to junior officers' descriptions of their enlistment. Particularly in memoirs, many junior officers suggested that entering the army was an intoxicating and exhilarating experience. Often, these officers suggested that the pomp and glamour of a military life seduced them into choosing the army for their career. The lure of military spectacle and, especially, showy military uniforms,

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<sup>5</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 33-4, 41-8.

was an important motivation for enlistment. As highlighted by Scott Hughes Myerly, uniforms were an integral aspect of the culture of military spectacle which the army cultivated. Often prioritising aesthetics over practicality, uniforms were designed to flatter the male form, and to project an idealised form of masculinity.<sup>6</sup> In her study of late-eighteenth century 'scarlet fever', Louise Carter highlighted how the image of military uniforms as an object of sexual attraction was actively promoted in Georgian society.<sup>7</sup> Officers' uniforms were particularly flattering, as they were tailored to fit, made of better material than rankers' uniforms, and were adorned with lace and braid.<sup>8</sup> Memoirists recalled wearing their uniforms for the first time with excitement, and cited the sexual appeal of uniforms. Recalling the first time he wore his new uniform, Thomas Staunton St. Clair hoped to win the affection of a girl: 'On trying on my full-dress embroidered coat ... I could not help thinking how killing I should look in it.'<sup>9</sup> Similarly, John Kincaid evoked the links between his volunteer uniform and sexual attraction: 'when I found myself on a Sunday in the front seat of the gallery of our parish church, exposed to the admiration of a congregation of milk-maids, my delight was without alloy.'<sup>10</sup> For Jonathan Leach, his first uniform was a symbol of his liberation from school life: 'I felt that delight which is experienced by most youngsters, on making an escape from school, putting on a scarlet coat, epaulet, cocked hat, and a tremendously long feather, to say nothing of the false queue affixed to a head of hair plastered with pomatum.'<sup>11</sup>

With an average of nineteen years, and a mode age of seventeen years at their commission, the officers included in this study were youthful. Particularly for these young officers, being commissioned could be an intoxicating experience, suggesting that they saw their new profession as providing autonomy, and freeing them from the strictures of family life. John Malcolm of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Foot recalled his early infatuation with the military, and especially the army's association with liberty:

There is something in the idea of a military life particularly fascinating to youth. The sight of a regiment marching past, with its colours flying, and its martial music, awakens a slumbering instinct in the soul ... There is a charm in the gorgeous array, the nodding plume, and the martial air of the soldier – in the unrestrained freedom

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<sup>6</sup> Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: from the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (London, 1996), pp. 17-20.

<sup>7</sup> Louise Carter, 'Scarlet Fever: Female Enthusiasm for Men in Uniform, 1780-1815', in *Britain's Soldiers*, pp. 156-62.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 135-7; Carter, 'Scarlet Fever', p. 158.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Staunton St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies and America: With a Narrative of the Expedition to the Island of Walcheren*, Vol. 1 (London, 1834), p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> John Kincaid, *Random Shots from a Rifleman* (London, 1835), p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), p. 2.

which is supposed to belong to a military life – in its promise of honour and glory – of love and war, and strange adventures in foreign lands. Against temptations like these, the voice of caution speaks in vain.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, George Wood of the 82nd Foot had an initial love for the: ‘gaiety, freedom and ease’ of military life.<sup>13</sup> Informed of his commission in the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot on 11 March 1811, George Bell instantly saw his new military career as liberating him from his ‘thralldom’ at a public school: ‘Six days after the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, I was just seventeen years of age, an independent military gentleman, let loose upon the world with the liberal pay of 5s. 3d.’<sup>14</sup>

Linked to the idea of liberty was the opportunity for travel that the army presented. As noted by Gavin Daly, as the Napoleonic wars blocked British travel to the continent, many soldiers availed themselves of the opportunity to interpret their military experiences as travellers.<sup>15</sup> Malcolm hoped to travel in the Romantic climes of the Peninsula: ‘the war in the Peninsula was at the hottest; and from the time I had a prospect of joining the army, all the romance of my nature was called forth, by the hope of visiting that interesting country. My very dreams were of orange groves and evening serenades, and latticed windows and dark-eyed beauties.’<sup>16</sup> Malcolm was not alone in associating his military career with travel. Describing his voyage to the Peninsula on board the *Samaritan*, William Grattan of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot recalled: ‘On board ... were ten or a dozen officers, who, like myself had seen little of the world.’<sup>17</sup> While Malcolm’s romantic evocation of the orange groves, evening serenades and latticed windows of Spain suggests that wanderlust played a role in him joining the army, his association of travel with ‘love and war’ and the sexual attraction of ‘dark-eyed beauties’ hints at a broader significance of travel to Malcolm. Officers lived and wrote in a context in which travel and the tradition of the ‘Grand Tour’ were felt to have far-reaching implications for manhood, masculinity and the self. During the eighteenth century, the ‘Grand Tour’ was seen as an important formative experience for young gentlemen, as travels around Europe were believed to foster the qualities essential around which a polite, gentlemanly adult identity centred: self-sufficiency, freedom of thought and refined manners.<sup>18</sup> As highlighted by Casey Blanton, this was reinforced by eighteenth-

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<sup>12</sup> John Malcolm, ‘Reminiscences of a Campaign in the Pyrenees and the South of France in 1814, in *Memorials of the Late War*, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1831), p. 235-6.

<sup>13</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 8-12.

<sup>16</sup> Malcolm, *Reminiscences of a Campaign*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>17</sup> William Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers: From 1808 to 1814*, Vol. I (London, 1847), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, ‘“Upon Your Entry into the World”: Masculine Values and the Threshold of Adulthood among Landed Elites in England, 1680-1800’, *Social History*, 33 (2008), p. 406; Michele Cohen, ‘The

century travel literature, which cast travel as an experience of self-reflection and development.<sup>19</sup> Napoleon's blockade of Europe, however, severely limited the opportunities for young men to complete this aspect of their gentlemanly education. Travel through military service, therefore, could act as a substitute for the formative experience of the Grand Tour, and provided a contributing motivation for young men to join the army.

There were also officers who were channelled into the military through family traditions. This is especially true for officers from families with traditional ties to the military, such as those from the aristocracy or the sons of officers. The aristocracy had long standing ties with the army, which was seen as a viable career for younger sons who could not expect to inherit land, while the sons of army officers made up a significant portion of British officers during the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> As highlighted in Chapter One, several officers in this study were the sons, or close relatives, of former army officers. St. Clair was the son of a former colonel, the brother to two army officers, and was born amongst the garrison on Gibraltar. Having stated his desire for a commission, St. Clair received his father's blessing to join the army, 'not having forgotten his own military ardour.'<sup>21</sup> Not all officers went willingly into the army. Unable to inherit land as his father sold the family estate, Peter Bowlby's dream of joining the navy was countermanded by his father: 'When my school days were ended my wish was to enter the Navy. My father remarked that I had two brothers already in the Navy, and but one in the Army, so it was decided that I should enter the Army.'<sup>22</sup> For wealthy or aristocratic families, notions of family honour and prestige appear to have been paramount in sending sons into the military. The importance which families could place on military commissions as a symbol of family status and prestige is borne out in the anecdotal evidence in officers' letters. Letters from parents could be used to ensure that sons were active in pursuing promotion. Having seen another officer promoted ahead of him, Ensign John Rous of the Coldstream Guards was forced to defend himself to his father:

it gives me the greatest uneasiness to find, that you regret having allowed  
Anstruther to have gone over my head ...as the army will be in England in a few  
months it will make no actual difference to me...I can only add that it will be doing

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Grand Tour: Constructing the English Gentleman in Eighteenth-Century France', *History of Education*, 21 (1992), pp. 242-44.

<sup>19</sup> Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York, NY, 2002), pp. 30-43.

<sup>20</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families, c. 1730-1830', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 85 (2006), pp. 78-9; J.A. Houlding, *Fit For Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford, 1981), p. 100.

<sup>21</sup> St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies*, Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Peter Bowlby', p. 4.

me the greatest kindness to think no more of having allowed an officer to go over my head.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, Ensign John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards experienced an indirect attack on his masculinity from his father after seeing a less senior officer promoted ahead of him: 'I regret to see you accuse me with having *permitted* a junior officer to have been put over me – rest assured, no person is more zealous for my interest than myself.'<sup>24</sup>

Patriotism played an important role in getting officers into the army, although not necessarily directly into the regulars. This is especially true of officers who joined the army during the first five years of the nineteenth century, when fears of French invasion and the threat of Napoleonic tyranny were at their peak.<sup>25</sup> The threat of invasion during this period saw the phenomenon of volunteering to serve with Britain's auxiliary forces, the volunteers and the militia, also reach its peak. As examples of 'citizens in arms', these institutions were more closely associated with patriotism than the regular army.<sup>26</sup> For some officers, the volunteers and militia units formed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars appear to have been an initial outlet for patriotism and military ardour. Facing the threat of French invasion, Harry Smith chose to join a local yeomanry unit, and recalled in his memoir: 'In 1804 the whole country was *en masse* collected in arms as volunteers from the expected invasion of the French, and being now sixteen years of age, I was received into the Whittlesea troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, commanded by Captain Johnson.'<sup>27</sup> During the summer of 1803, Robert Bakewell joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Loyal London regiment of volunteers, noting that: 'The citizens about this period appear'd to be attack'd with a military phrenzy.'<sup>28</sup> Kincaid was similarly swept up: 'I had left school as a school-boy, unconscious of a feeling beyond the passing moment. But the period at length arrived when Buonaparte's threatened invasion fired every loyal pair of shoulders with a scarlet coat.'<sup>29</sup> The motives of patriotism as an attraction to the military should not be viewed as exclusive to Britain's auxiliary forces. Service with auxiliary forces overlapped with regular service in several ways. Increased state control of volunteer units saw them more closely reflect the

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<sup>23</sup> Ensign John Rous 16 Apr. 1814, in John Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsular War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), pp. 113-4.

<sup>24</sup> Ensign John Aitchison, 6 Dec. 1809, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K. Thompson (London, 1981), p.72.

<sup>25</sup> Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven, CT, 2004), pp. 45-6.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew McCormack, 'The New Militia: War, Politics and Gender in 1750s Britain', *Gender & History*, 19 (2007), pp. 483-500.

<sup>27</sup> Harry Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on the Sutlej*, ed. G.C. Moore Smith (London, 1901), pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Robert Bakewell, 'Diary of Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 7.

military experience, as units received pay for service and began to wear uniforms.<sup>30</sup> Local considerations and influences provided militia and volunteer members with the opportunity to perform many of the same roles which the regular army offered, without attracting the same stigma as regulars.<sup>31</sup> The militia, especially, blurred the line between service with Britain's auxiliary forces and the regular army. As a fertile recruiting ground of rankers and officers for the regular army, it is possible that some men joined the militia with the intention of using it as a stepping-stone to the army proper, suggesting a potential overlap in motivations.

Lastly, there were officers who joined the army with the intention of making the army their career. George Simmons, a surgeon by trade, joined the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifle via a militia transfer in the hope of obtaining patronage and promotion that would allow him to provide for his parents and siblings, as he wrote home shortly after gaining his commission:

I am confident there would have been little chance of promoting the interests of my family as I was situated; and as a soldier, with perseverance, I must in time have promotion, which will enable me to be of use to my family; and at all times it will be my greatest pleasure and pride to take care that the boys go regularly to a good school, and I have no doubt of seeing them one day men of some experience through my interposition.<sup>32</sup>

While Simmons was an officer with a clear intention behind his getting a commission, there is the sense that other officers resorted to the army out of necessity, having failed at other careers. Having briefly flirted with the military with an ensigncy in the 29<sup>th</sup> Foot, George James Sullivan joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards after having struggled to establish himself as a lawyer:

determining once more to enter the Army, being the only station or sphere in life that my humble abilities could in any way be turned to a good account. An idle life, I mean one without a Profession, I detested, for there is something so disreputable in a young man when he is asked what Profession he is following, to say "none at all." This idea was most repugnant to me & induced me to re-enter His Majesty's service

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<sup>30</sup> Kevin Linch, 'A Geography of Loyalism? The Local Militia Forces of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1794-1815', *War & Society*, 19 (2001), p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Linch, 'A Geography of Loyalism?', pp. 3-8.

<sup>32</sup> Ensign George Simmons, 21 May 1809, in George Simmons, *A British Rifle Man: Journals and Correspondence during the Peninsular War and the Campaign of Wellington*, ed. Willoughby Verner (London, 1986), pp. 6-7.

& with my small pittance & my pay as Cornet or Lieut. I thought I could manage to get on, & I hoped ultimately to be a credit to my friends.<sup>33</sup>

Robert Bakewell and John Harley, two officers in this study who were in their thirties when commissioned, provide examples of how older individuals effectively used the army as a last resort. Bakewell, an officer from a reasonably well-off farming family, was frozen out of the family business and failed to establish himself in a profession despite several attempts in his twenties. Returning to his family's estate from London, Bakewell was ushered into the army aged thirty-four by his father, having spent several idle years at home: 'and very little if anything to do ... a Mr. William Fallows ... told me that he had seen my name gazetted for an Ensigncy commission in the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and when I mention'd that circumstance to my father, he told me that he had paid four hundred pounds [for the commission].'<sup>34</sup>

While Harley asserted at the start of his memoir that he had a deep-seated predilection for the military, suggesting a rudimentary appeal to the army, he appears to have only turned to the military after finding civilian opportunities limited.<sup>35</sup> The son of a wealthy Roman Catholic father, Harley was swindled out of his family property and fortune after his father, being legally barred from owning property, placed it in the hands of a Protestant trust holder.<sup>36</sup> After struggling to establish himself in a mercantile profession, Harley was commissioned to the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot from an Irish fencible unit in June 1800, at the age of 31.<sup>37</sup> Reduced to half-pay following the Peace of Amiens in 1802, Harley variously attempted to begin a professional career in London, purchase shares, and also bought land in Ireland, but: 'Finding a difficulty in procuring a situation to my wishes ... effected an exchange into the 47<sup>th</sup>.'<sup>38</sup> Harley's military career highlights the reliance which some officers placed on the army for their profession. While many officers cited the more romantic notions of military glamour and patriotism as attracting them to the army, others appeared to join the army out of practicality. The multitude of potential motivations for junior officers to join the army suggests that a variety of factors encouraged prospective officers to seek out a commission.

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<sup>33</sup> British Library, London (hereafter, BL) RP 8211, George James Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lieutenant George James Sullivan', pp. 36-7.

<sup>34</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Bakewell, 'Diary of Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, pp. 44-5.

<sup>35</sup> John Harley, *The Veteran, or, Forty Years in the British Service: Comprising Adventures in Egypt, Spain Portugal, Belgium, Holland and Prussia*, Vol. I (London, 1838), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>37</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, pp. 186-95.



### ***Suffering and Subordination***

The factors which motivated junior officers to obtain a commission could, to a degree, be undermined by their military experiences. As noted by Kennedy in her study of subaltern officers and military masculinities, the hardships of campaigning, and the subordinate position of subalterns damaged the image of military glamour and conflicted with subalterns' sense of 'manly independence'.<sup>39</sup> The figure of the 'suffering subaltern' is important here. Suffering was central to junior officers' accounts, especially those of subalterns. Being attuned to suffering was a feature of discourses of sensibility and sentimentalism which were current in late-eighteenth century British literature and society.<sup>40</sup> As highlighted by Neil Ramsey, suffering formed an important part of romantic military memoirs, as soldier memoirists appealed to their readers' sympathies by highlighting their suffering on campaign.<sup>41</sup> By emphasising their suffering, authors highlighted the soldier's self-sacrifice for the nation, thereby reinforcing the author's distinct status as a soldier.<sup>42</sup> Captain John Kincaid of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles claimed: 'our very privations were a source of pride to us'.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Lieutenant John Cooke of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot looked upon the tattered uniforms of his comrades as badges of honour: 'Seven regiments of light infantry and riflemen defiled before us, with wide and patched trousers of various colours, and threadbare jackets ... with infinite admiration did I regard the purple jackets battered epaulettes of my companions.'<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary accounts suggest that the suffering and hardship experienced by subalterns, especially, could undermine the allure of a military career. By then a veteran of the disastrous Walcheren campaign, Ensign William Thornton Keep wrote to his brother: 'You must remember it is not all gold that glitters, and the road to distinction is a hazardous one. In the pursuit of happiness surely one chief essential is security for life and property, yet both are risked in the military profession.'<sup>45</sup> As demonstrated by Gavin Daly, the extreme weather conditions and routine hardships experienced by soldiers during the Peninsular War encouraged British

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<sup>39</sup> Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 131-3.

<sup>40</sup> John Brewer, 'Sentiment and Sensibility', in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler (Cambridge, 2009), p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Neil Ramsey, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780-1835* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 38-40.

<sup>42</sup> Ramsey, *The Military Memoir*, pp. 184-89.

<sup>43</sup> Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 271.

<sup>44</sup> John Cooke, *A True Soldier Gentleman: The Memoirs of Lt. John Cooke, 1791-1813*, ed. Eileen Hathaway (Swanage, 2000), pp. 78-9.

<sup>45</sup> William Thornton Keep, 7 Apr. 1812, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsular, 1808-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1997), p. 83.

officers to accentuate their 'romantic suffering' in their accounts.<sup>46</sup> It is in accounts of Peninsular War service that junior officers' suffering was most pronounced. The hardship that attended long marches, food shortages, sickness, the extremities of hot and cold weather, and the backward living conditions of the Spanish and Portuguese were all recurrent features of accounts describing the Peninsular War. In a letter to his brothers, Ensign George Hennell of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot noted how privation sharpened the enjoyment of basic meals: 'This has been rather a fatiguing retreat to our animals ... If we are well and get a comfortable meal we are repaid for our disagreeables. You in England have no idea of the enjoyment of a cup of good tea with a chop or steak in our fingers sitting on the ground on a fine morning after a rainy night.'<sup>47</sup> Convalescing in London after a bout of malaria he received in the Peninsula, Lieutenant John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Guards wrote in his journal that any glory he had achieved was: 'dearly purchased! – at two and twenty I find myself unequal to extraordinary exertion ... and I am left in doubt whether I shall ever be restored to my former health.'<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, subalterns saw this suffering as the product of their low rank. This sense cut across regimental and social lines, suggesting that the suffering subalterns associated with their rank was important in the formation of a collective identity *as* subalterns that provided a point of commonality between junior officers of different regiments. George Wood, a middle-class officer who served in the Peninsular War as a subaltern in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot, recalled retreating through a 'little dirty village' during the 1812 retreat from Burgos, in which he: 'got a little dirty billet, such as commonly fell to the lot of officers of my rank.'<sup>49</sup> In an 1812 letter home, Ensign John Mills, a gentry officer in the aristocratic Coldstream Guards, contrasted his experiences with superior officers: 'We are never under cover even of a shrub for this country is not favoured with anything bigger than a vine. The rain comes down in torrents. Headquarters and the Staff are always snug in houses, and do not care about the weather.'<sup>50</sup> Mills' sense of injustice was compounded by his belief that his sufferings stemmed from Wellington's indifference: 'you must know that our Noble Marquis is not gifted with much feeling – ambition hardens the heart. He only regards the comforts of his men as far as it is actually necessary to his purposes.'<sup>51</sup> Highlighting this sense of shared consciousness formed through suffering, is the 1811 poem

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<sup>46</sup> Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 81-6.

<sup>47</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 10 Nov. 1812, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812-1813*, ed. Michael Glover (London, 1979), p. 59.

<sup>48</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, journal, 26 Mar. 1811, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K. Thompson (London, 1981), p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), p. 166.

<sup>50</sup> Ensign John Mills, 14 Sep. 1812, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-14*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), p. 223.

<sup>51</sup> Ensign John Mills, 14 Sep. 1812, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 223.

'The Subaltern's Elegy'. Written and printed by a subaltern in the Peninsula, the 'Subaltern's Elegy' was composed to resonate specifically with other subalterns. The poem's author described the subaltern as 'a moping, half starv'd Hero', and listed the subaltern's hardships, including sleeping on rough ground covered with fleas, and the everyday hunger occasioned by living on rations.<sup>52</sup> This poem emphasised the capacity of suffering to undermine the lustre of military service, especially uniforms.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the image of dashing manhood that was propagated by pristine uniforms, the poem's author instead highlighted: 'the crimson Coat seem'd o'er with stitches, The torn, degenerate, Regimental breaches, Behold, how pale and worn, the once brisk sash is.'<sup>54</sup>

In addition to suffering, junior officers could also see their status in the military hierarchy as impinging on their sense of 'independence', a point also revealed by Kennedy.<sup>55</sup> As demonstrated by Matthew McCormack, the ideal of 'independence' was represented by contemporaries as a central feature of Georgian masculinities. 'Independence' connoted personal autonomy and freedom from dependence, and was held aloft as the epitome of English national character and masculine citizenship.<sup>56</sup> As noted by several scholars, while the spectacle of the army could seduce new recruits, military service was not portrayed in a universally positive light in Georgian society. While junior officers often saw their military careers as putting them at liberty, contemporary critics could see soldiers as having sacrificed their independence. Myerly has highlighted how military uniforms carried a double meaning, with the potential for military uniforms to be seen as a sign of the wearer's submission to external authority.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Carter has also highlighted how critics saw uniforms as a signifier of subservience and also noted that the sexual appeal associated with military uniforms could be portrayed as a corrupting and effeminising influence.<sup>58</sup> None of the junior officers in this study reflected on the potentially effeminising effects of wearing a uniform, suggesting that negative representations of the army were not inculcated by members of the army; however, junior officers certainly felt that the military hierarchy impinged on their sense of independent masculinity.<sup>59</sup> For junior officers, their meagre income and subservience to superior rank was a far cry from the figure of the personally and financially autonomous 'independent man'.<sup>60</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup> NAM 1972-12-32, 'The Subaltern's Elegy'.

<sup>53</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', p. 127.

<sup>54</sup> NAM 1972-12-32, 'The Subaltern's Elegy'.

<sup>55</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', pp. 132-3.

<sup>56</sup> Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 12-28.

<sup>57</sup> Myerly, *British Military Spectacle*, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Carter, 'Scarlet Fever', pp. 176-7.

<sup>59</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', pp. 132-3.

<sup>60</sup> McCormack, *The Independent Man*, pp. 16-7.

diary of Aitchison is illuminating with regards to the implications of military service for independent masculinity, of which financial pressures played a part. The son of a Scottish laird, notions of independence were likely to appeal to Aitchison. Reliant on an income from his father to maintain the lifestyle of a Guardsman, Aitchison complained: 'Were any misfortune to deprive my worthy parent of the means of supporting me ... how could I live! Not by my pay for that is barely sufficient for my cloths! ... I am compelled to live as *cautiously* abstemious as a ruined *debauchee*.'<sup>61</sup> Complaints about pay were even more common in line officers' accounts.

Lieutenant William Grattan noted in his memoir: 'The life of a subaltern in ... a marching regiment, where many of us, and I myself for one, had little except our pay, is a perpetual scene of irritating calculation from the 24<sup>th</sup> of one month to the 24<sup>th</sup> of the next.'<sup>62</sup> Keep wrote to his mother about a series of expensive uniform changes that occurred, and stated: 'I think the Prince Regent is very inconsiderate in ordering such constant deviations in our uniform.'<sup>63</sup>

A lack of personal autonomy was a particular point of contention for subalterns, especially those from elite backgrounds. Aitchison saw the army as forcing subalterns into a subservient position, stating: 'these is something in the life of a subaltern on service so nearly approaching slavery as generally disgusts ... I am galled most at *the want of independence* which I can never gain.'<sup>64</sup> Having been denied a captaincy just prior to Waterloo, Lieutenant George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards, and the son a wealthy land-owner, wrote to a friend: 'I regret bitterly having to slave through this campaign in the ranks, where nothing is to be seen or got in the shape of information, honour, or reward.'<sup>65</sup> Promotion to captain did not necessarily banish this sense of subordination. Marooned in garrison life in Glasgow for much of the Napoleonic Wars, Captain John Sinclair of the 79<sup>th</sup> Foot wrote to his sister about a family friend:

I have not been to see Barbara. I intend to call and see her on my way north. I had a letter from her this morning in which she is very severe on me. She seems to think since I am Captain, that I have the world at my disposal and do as I like. She thinks I am much taken with Glasgow, but I assure her that I never was in a place in my life that I more sincerely detest. I most sincerely wish I were out of it.<sup>66</sup>

Such sentiments were not universal. In a letter to his uncle, Captain Edward Charles Cocks described soldiers in a letter to his uncle as: 'preserving more individual independence than any

<sup>61</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, journal, 26 Mar. 1811, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> William Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers, from 1808 to 1814*, Vol. I (London, 1847), p. 82.

<sup>63</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 14 Feb. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 78.

<sup>64</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, journal, 26 Mar. 1811, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 30 Dec. 1814, in George Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo: The Letters of Captain George Bowles, Coldstream Guards, 1808-1819*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 97.

<sup>66</sup> National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter, NRS) GD 139-369, Captain John Sinclair, 16 Jul. 1812.

class of men.’<sup>67</sup> In the same letter, Cocks appeared to criticise those who could not see the relationship between sacrificing some personal autonomy for a national good: ‘they confound a selfish love of individual licence of action with patriotism, but love of liberty if applied only to self is an interested and consequently base feeling.’<sup>68</sup> Drawn from a wealthy land-owning and parliamentary family, however, Cocks was possessed of an outside income that allowed him to maintain a high standard of living. He was also regularly employed on intelligence service, affording him the opportunity of exercising independent judgement.

Furthermore, the sense of ‘polite gentlemanliness’ which permeated the British officer corps eased potential tensions arising from submission to the military hierarchy. For junior officers, being afforded the respect of a gentleman by their superiors was central to how they reconciled themselves to the military hierarchy. Respectful treatment from superiors eased possible tensions, while also engendering respect for superior officers. Charles Steevens, then a captain in the 20<sup>th</sup> Foot, commented on Sir John Moore ordering him to relocate in the prelude to the 1809 Battle of Corunna: ‘I thought Sir John Moore made his enquiries and gave his orders to me in such a mild gentlemanly way; I was quite shocked with his engaging manners, and so were my two subalterns; and I am sure the men of my company seemed, all of them, to be equally pleased with him.’<sup>69</sup> As perceived by junior officers, the ideal commanding officer blended the demands of gentlemanliness and discipline, with gentlemanly conduct stimulating the respect which gave rank its weight. Un-gentlemanly conduct in any circumstance could bring even a general’s character into question, particularly when overbearing behaviour was directed at subordinates. Recalling the first time his regiment paraded before General Thomas Picton, Grattan of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot recalled his and the other officers’ distaste for Picton’s conduct, after he held a drum-head court martial for two soldiers, had them flogged in front of the entire division, and then addressed the regiment: ‘in language, not of that bearing which an officer of his rank should do ... Language like this was enough to exasperate the lowest soldier, equally with the colonel.’<sup>70</sup> Domineering and authoritative officers were decried as ‘martinets’ or ‘tyrants’ by junior officers, who appear to have preferred a milder course of leadership. Crowe stated: ‘an officer with gentlemanly feeling, and good sense, could be a strict disciplinarian without being a

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<sup>67</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812* (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), p. 156.

<sup>68</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 156.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Steevens, *Reminiscences of my Military Life, from 1795 to 1818*, ed. Nathaniel Steevens (Winchester, 1878), pp. 75-6.

<sup>70</sup> Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers*, p. 18.

tyrant as we have witnessed in Sir John Moore and the Duke of Wellington with very many others.’<sup>71</sup>

Well-liked regimental commanders had their popularity grounded in their gentlemanly reputation and conduct, and officers who made accommodating displays towards juniors were held in high regard. The behaviour expected of superiors varied between regiments. Imbued with a heightened sense of gentlemanliness, Guards officers appear to have appreciated being treated with familiarity bordering on equality. Ensign John Fremantle of the Coldstream Guards praised his battalion’s new commander: ‘Colonel Brand has succeeded ... He is an exceeding pleasant man and I live upon the best possible terms with him.’<sup>72</sup> Few junior officers had the close relationship which Orlando Bridgeman did with his superior officers. Bridgeman contrasted his commanders in the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards with those of his brother, a naval officer: ‘the admiral is very strict ... When I compare the different way that he is treated by his superior officers from that which we experience in the Guards it is very striking, & I am sure he feels it.’<sup>73</sup> Bridgeman, the son of an aristocrat in one of the army’s most aristocratically minded regiments, may have owed the good graces of his superiors to his family connections. Having left a letter unfinished in his quarters, Bridgeman was surprised to find a note for his mother in the letter when he returned: ‘My most respectful compliments to Lady Bradford & I have the satisfaction to say her boy Orlando is quite well & very saucy. S[igned] Stopford Major General in charge of this miscreant.’<sup>74</sup> The lack of these traits made Wellington unpopular amongst some officers of the Guards, who criticised his aloofness and occasional indifference to his officers and men. Mills stated that Wellington was: ‘not gifted with much feeling – ambition hardens the heart.’<sup>75</sup>

While Guards officers placed a greater emphasis on their gentlemanly status, officers from less prestigious backgrounds respected superiors who displayed a form of benign paternalism. Afraid that he had embarrassed himself as a newly commissioned ensign in the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot, George Bell was surprised to find his first colonel, Fenwick: ‘an amiable man, a good and gallant soldier, decided in character, just and impartial.’<sup>76</sup> Describing two respected senior officers of the Light, Major General Baron Charles Alten and Lieutenant Colonel Barnard, Jonathan Leach of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles described their positive qualities as: ‘a thorough knowledge of their profession, calm, cool courage, great presence of mind in action, frank and gentlemanly manners, and the

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<sup>71</sup> Lieutenant Charles Crowe, 6 Dec. 1812, in Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ensign John Fremantle, 15 Dec. 1810, in John Fremantle, *Wellington’s Voice: The Candid Letters of Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, 1808-1837*, ed. Gareth Glover (London, 2012), p.157.

<sup>73</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 6 Aug. 1812, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 51.

<sup>74</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 7 Sep. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 138.

<sup>75</sup> Ensign John Mills, 14 Sep. 1812, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 223.

<sup>76</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier During Fifty Years’ Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General, C.B.* (London, 1867), p. 11.

total absence of what may be termed teasing those under their command.<sup>77</sup> As will be explored in Chapter Five, junior officers could also describe well-liked commanders in more affectionate terms, such as describing their colonels as 'fathers'. Establishing this filial relationship between junior and superior officers, however, would have been impossible without the prior formation of mutual respect that stemmed from being treated as 'polite gentlemen' by superior officers.

In contrast to their hopes of liberty and freedom that attended their enlistment, many junior officers were situated in a position within the military hierarchy which conflicted with their sense of 'independent' masculinity. Combined with a sense of suffering as a result of their low status, this subordination was a significant contributing factor to junior officers' identities as junior officers. Drawing a distinction between their experiences, and the experiences of superior officers, junior officers saw themselves as belonging to a section of the military which was defined by their subordination. To a degree, these concerns were moderated by kind treatment on the part of superior officers; however, this should not overshadow the undercurrent of inferiority which characterised junior officers' views of their position within the military hierarchy.

### **Promotion**

Junior officers saw promotion as essential to elevating them above the subordination they experienced and to affirm their status. Junior officer accounts suggest that a desire for public recognition and promotion were inherently bound. In *Britons*, Colley has demonstrated how the British aristocracy cultivated a public image of duty and heroic self-sacrifice for the nation, which then influenced individual conduct.<sup>78</sup> Junior officer accounts suggest that the effects of this culture were twofold. Firstly, junior officers were conscious that their low status made them unlikely recipients of public praise, and secondly, that they aimed to be promoted in the hope of earning glory. Writing to his brother, Keep was pessimistic at his prospects of gaining glory as a subaltern: 'the experience I have had prevents all anticipation of acquiring renown ... the forms of the British service seldom admitting that honour to Subalterns or even Captains, which make officers of that grade anxious to get their promotion advanced to the rank of Lieut. Colonel ... then they might have some chance.'<sup>79</sup> While Keep highlighted a degree of disillusionment with his low status, he also noted how this sense of obscurity made officers desirous of achieving promotion. Rank was a tangible marker of status. Aside from much – desired medals, token examples of recognition could be looked upon with derision. Grattan

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<sup>77</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Notes of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), p. 262.

<sup>78</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT, 2014), pp. 185-90.

<sup>79</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Sep. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 96.

noted how the extra shilling per day paid to lieutenants with seven years' service 'was rarely heard of and never thought of but with disgust.'<sup>80</sup>

A cursory reading of officers' memoirs and letters reveals just how seriously junior officers took the issue of promotion. Discussions of army lists, the publishing of commissions and promotions in the *Gazette* and the permutations of promotion within a regiment abound in officers' writings. Hoping to obtain a majority in the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons by purchasing into an infantry regiment and effecting an exchange back into the 16<sup>th</sup>, Cocks stated that promotion was: 'so very much of consequence to me that I would mortgage or sell 2/3 of my estate and live on bread and water.'<sup>81</sup> For officers lacking in other prospects, promotion was the instrument by which status could be most easily attained. Ensign Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards noted a deceased captain of his regiment who had risked financial ruin to purchase into his regiment: 'Poor Martin is a great loss, to his regiment as a most excellent officer, & to his wife & family, who I fear are in bad circumstances, he always was a poor man & sunk a part of his fortune to enable him to purchase his company.'<sup>82</sup> The regimental variations in promotion were not lost on junior officers. Rous advised his parents to usher his brother into the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards, not only for their reputation, but for their faster rate of promotion in comparison to the Coldstream:

if William had gone into the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards he would have been more than half way up the list of Ensigns, with a great chance of getting several steps very soon. I can see amongst them many officers who will not remain on service another year, all men of small fortune; unluckily our[s] are men of no fortune and are therefore obliged to remain.<sup>83</sup>

Similarly, Aitchison wrote to his family: 'In giving my opinion of the regiment George should go into ... I said a regiment of the Line in preference to the Guards because in the Line the promotion is so much the quicker.'<sup>84</sup> The officers included above were all from aristocratic and landed families. Given the traditional relationship between aristocratic and gentry families, and military service, it is possible that their social background sharpened these officers' desire for promotion.

Promotion rates varied and depended on a number of factors, such as regiment, time spent on active service, and whether or not an officer was able to purchase rank. By 1809, the minimum

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<sup>80</sup> Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, Vol. I, p. 82.

<sup>81</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 24 Jul. 1811, in Cocks, *An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 122.

<sup>82</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 19 Dec. 1813, Orlando Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War: The Letters of Captain The Honourable Orlando Bridgeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 169.

<sup>83</sup> Ensign John Rous, 24 Sep. 1813, in Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 78.

<sup>84</sup> Ensign John Aitchison, 23 Jun. 1809, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, pp. 58-59.



service requirements for promotion ensured that a subaltern could not become a captain without three years' experience, while a majority could not be attained without seven years' service, two of which must have been as a captain.<sup>85</sup> While minimum service requirements had, technically, been in place during the late-eighteenth century, they were not uniformly enforced until the Duke of York's reforms of the mid-1790s.<sup>86</sup> On average, the officers in this study were relatively consistent in the time they spent between ranks. An ensign or cornet could expect a gap of two years before they were promoted to lieutenant, with no difference in time between officers who purchased and those promoted by seniority.<sup>87</sup> Some, like John Rous of the Coldstream Guards, had to wait nearly four years to become a lieutenant. Purchase had a greater effect in being promoted to captain. On average, lieutenants would have served nearly nine years before being promoted to captain. Those who purchased rank, however, could normally be promoted after six years' service.<sup>88</sup> This rapid rate may be attributed to several officers who purchased captaincies after only a few years' service in the 1790s, before the introduction of minimum service lengths; and to some officers who managed to be promoted quickly during the Napoleonic Wars. Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons became a captain after three-and-a-half years' service, having being accelerated up the ranks once his talent was noted by Wellington.

The enforcement of minimum service requirements before promotion could occur ensured that ambitious and wealthy officers could not rapidly ascend the ranks through liberal use of the purchase system. Being required to serve a minimum period before promotion was possible may have contributed to a general sense of irritation at glacial promotion rates. After waiting five years and one month for his promotion from ensign to lieutenant, Aitchison warned his brother against joining the army: 'because it does not seem to me so likely to promote what I suppose every man has in his view, viz *his advancement in the world*.'<sup>89</sup> Faced with slow promotion in the Coldstream, Mills vented his frustration to his mother with cynical humour: 'If I do not make haste I shall be invalided and removed from hence to a Garrison Battalion with some other lively old chaps, to do duty at the Cape of Good Hope.'<sup>90</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot wrote his sister of a fortunate comrade: 'Robert Mackay expects his lieutenancy by purchase to be in the next Gazette, he may think himself very lucky as he has not served

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<sup>85</sup> Burnham & McGuigan, *The British Army Against Napoleon*, p. 150.

<sup>86</sup> Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 152.

<sup>87</sup> Time between promotions are taken from the *Army List*, which provided the dates on which an officer attained their rank, with official War Office notices of commissions published in the *London Gazette* used to determine whether an officer purchased their promotion, The National Archives, London (hereafter, TNA) WO 65/29-162, *A List of all the Officers of the Army*.

<sup>89</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, journal, 26 Mar. 1811, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> Ensign John Mills, 05 Jul. 1812, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 173.

above *ten months* as ensign. I was very near *two years*.<sup>91</sup> As the majority of promotions went by seniority, officers were attracted to regiments with high casualty rates, as deaths or the retirement of war-weary officers created vacancies for inferior ranked officers to fill. Having purchased a captaincy in the 99<sup>th</sup> Foot, Kinloch wrote to his mother that he was reluctant to join the regiment, as it was unlikely to see any action: 'It was raised in 1805 and went out to N America the year after, where it has been ever since ... The promotion in it hitherto has been enormously slow.'<sup>92</sup> Shortly after purchasing his captaincy, Kinloch exchanged with an officer of the 52<sup>nd</sup> by paying him a fee, ensuring he never physically left the 52<sup>nd</sup>. Lieutenant William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons wrote to his father: 'It must be allowed that War, or rather Service, is a famous thing for promotion. I was twelfth Lieutenant when I landed at Lisbon; am now Fifth and shall probably be first for purchase by the Time I have served the regular Period as more of our Cpts and Subs are heartily sick of the business.'<sup>93</sup>

John Cookson has warned of the difficulties in examining structural forces in the pre-bureaucratic state, while Penelope Corfield has highlighted how the growing professional ethos of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Britain developed alongside informal patronage networks.<sup>94</sup> It is unsurprising, then, to find junior officers attempting to exploit patronage to attain promotion. Junior officers sought to use whatever connections they could muster to speed their way up the promotion chain. As noted by Michael Glover, being appointed into a rank via direct influence from a senior officer was rare: just over seven per cent of regimental promotions during the Peninsular War were the result of direct appointment from patronage.<sup>95</sup> While direct appointments as a result of patronage were rare, employing the influence of a patron was useful in obtaining a commission in a good regiment, or for officers seeking out a position with the staff. The capacity of good connections to lubricate appointments highlights the importance of personal relationships within the army, and suggests that focusing on the regulations surrounding promotion would obscure an important aspect of promotion within the army. Most officers who had a good reputation with their colonel appeared able to rely on their good word. George and Maud Simmons, both lieutenants with the Peninsular Army, for example, elicited recommendations from their colonels for their younger brother to join the army as a

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<sup>91</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 8 May 1810, in Charles Kinloch, *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Light infantry, 1806-16*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2007), p. 51.

<sup>92</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 25 Mar. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 116.

<sup>93</sup> Lieutenant William Bragge, 18 Oct. 1812, in William Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait, 1811-1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons*, ed. S.A.C. Cassels (New York, NY, 1963), p. 78.

<sup>94</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 28; Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1750-1850* (London, 1995), pp. 210-11.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1980), p. 233.

volunteer.<sup>96</sup> The letters of Charles Kinloch, a captain with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot are illuminating as to the workings and limitations of the patronage system as he sought out patronage for himself to obtain a captaincy. Drawn from a reasonably wealthy Scottish gentry family, Kinloch had some pre-existing family connections: Kinloch's uncle was a colonel with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foot, while he was a cousin to General Sir Thomas Graham. This family connection with Graham was crucial in Kinloch gaining the inside word on where an opportunity to purchase a captaincy would soon occur. Having met with Graham in London in February 1813, Kinloch wrote to his mother that Graham: 'had mentioned me to the Duke, who had spoken very graciously on the subject, also to Colonel Torrens who also promised fair & had got a hint ... of a company likely to be vacant in the 72<sup>nd</sup>.'<sup>97</sup>

This patronage appears to have paid off, as Kinloch was able to purchase a captaincy in the 99<sup>th</sup> Foot; however, Kinloch hit a snag as his intended exchange back into the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot met with resistance. Despite agreeing an above regulation price with a captain of the 52<sup>nd</sup> who would exchange into the 99<sup>th</sup> in his place; Kinloch found his exchange blocked after a letter complaining of his slow progress was sent to the Horse Guards.<sup>98</sup> Kinloch believed that a favourable reference from a superior officer would have resolved the matter, as he wrote to his mother: 'Had General Graham ... been in town they [the Horse Guards] would never have hesitated to grant it, or if I had any person of the least interest to speak to the Duke on the subject.'<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, Kinloch was concerned that if his letter of complaint made its way into Wellington's hands, it would irretrievably damage his reputation, and shatter any hope of further promotion: 'it would be a most cruel thing, for it would not only stand in the way of the present affair, but might be a bar to any thing I should wish to done hereafter.'<sup>100</sup> The day after sending this letter, Kinloch received news that his exchange back into the 52<sup>nd</sup> had been completed, owing to the intervention of a general. Kinloch's travails are suggestive as to the importance of patronage in achieving a favourable appointment. Forming a favourable opinion with senior officers, therefore, could work to a junior officer's advantage.

The use of patronage was a contentious issue for junior officers. The perceived monopoly that aristocratic or wealthy officers had on patronage and the ability to purchase rank saw the issue of promotions become politicised. Some officers took issue with what they saw as the corruption of the system of promotion by aristocratic influence. These sentiments were expressed largely in post-war memoirs, suggesting that the growing prominence of a

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<sup>96</sup> Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>97</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 23 Feb. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 116.

<sup>98</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 22 Jul. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 156.

<sup>99</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 26 Jul. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 157.

<sup>100</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 22 Jul. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 156.

'professional' ethos in early-nineteenth century Britain was influential in shaping these officers' writings. Corfield has revealed how a professional ethos that valued technical know-how developed in eighteenth-century Britain, which strengthened during the early-nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup> In exploring 'middle-class' identities in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, Dror Wahrman highlighted how proponents of 'professionalism' drew on established anti-aristocratic discourses, which attacked aristocratic influence as a corrupting force.<sup>102</sup> Writing in the post-war period, officer memoirists appear to have been influenced by these forces, as they adopted an anti-aristocratic discourse, which argued that meritorious officers were overlooked in favour of wealthy or well-connected officers, who effectively received promotion because of their social standing. Bell had distaste for: 'cold aristocratic pride, injustice and partiality', as: 'Promotion went too often by favour, *Court* influence, political intrigue, or Horse Guards interest.'<sup>103</sup>

The concept of 'merit' was important to these critics, who emphasised the deserving nature of overlooked officers. This was particularly the case in post-war memoirs, as officers turned to criticising the system of promotions to vent frustration at their unfulfilled aspirations. George Wood, a veteran of the Peninsular War, wrote a critique of the military, *The Rambles of Redbury Rook*, as a follow-up text to his memoir, *The Subaltern Officer*. Both texts display Wood's disillusionment with the military, a key element of which was the preference given to wealth in the British officer corps: 'suppose the officer to have been thirty years in the service, and at length by dint of perseverance, which by these gentlemen is called merit, he obtains his company. Had he possessed money to purchase, or been blest with friends at Court, he might have gained it ten years sooner.'<sup>104</sup> Robert Blakeney of the 28<sup>th</sup> was critical of: 'the obstacles opposed to reward of personal merit by an all-grasping aristocratical interference.'<sup>105</sup> What constituted 'merit' for these officers is difficult to determine, as few offered a definition. Attention to duty and competency at drill were both key components of junior officers' professional identity, yet they only constituted part of the ideal of 'merit'. Despite some exceptional cases, 'merit' as conceived by junior infantry or cavalry officers appears to have revolved around the qualities of 'natural' leadership: bravery, steadfastness and heroism. Describing the 1813 battle of Vitoria and the campaign in the Pyrenees, Bell noted that: 'There were deeds of valour achieved by hundreds of British officers, within the last few weeks, that

<sup>101</sup> Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1750-1850*, ch. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 2-7.

<sup>103</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier*, p. 114.

<sup>104</sup> George Wood, *The Rambles of Redbury Rook, or, A Caution to His Own Species How they Embrace the Profession of Arms* (London, 1826), p. 138.

<sup>105</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment, an Autobiography*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), pp. 211-2.

would astonish the soldiers of any other nation in the world ... Yet these officers were entirely neglected.'<sup>106</sup>

Officers who obtained rank through wealth or influence were open to accusations of losing their independence, as they entered into a dependent state of subordination to money or a patron. As revealed by McCormack, the use of patronage in Georgian political culture had implications for masculinity, as voters who were the recipient of a patron's grace were placed in a position of obligation, which undermined their claims to independence.<sup>107</sup> Wood had little sympathy for officers who purchased commissions, 'or rather...sell their liberty – for from that moment they lose their independence, and, become, I think, even worse than slaves.'<sup>108</sup> In contrast to the dependence experienced by officers who purchased their rank, Wood emphasised his promotion by merit, which subsequently emphasised his freedom from external influence. Wood was proud of attaining the rank of captain, 'in about seven years, without money or interest, being, in every sense of the word, a soldier of Fortune.'<sup>109</sup> The pervasive influence of patronage, however, presented problems for officers critical of such forces. Describing his experiences in the Peninsula as a subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot, Robert Blakeney disdained aristocratic influence and patronage. Blakeney, however, received the favour of Colonel Abercrombie and Lord Lynedoch:

Here will be seen an officer, high in rank and still higher in reputation...writing in familiar language to a subaltern officer, showing anxiety for his interests and using every exertion to forward his promotion from no other motive than the belief that he had fully discharged his duties to his king and country...I had no introduction from influential friends to his lordship.<sup>110</sup>

There is an inherent tension in Blakeney's account between receiving patronage on one hand, and being completely opposed to it on the other. Blakeney is far from unique in this sense, as many officers, lacking in opportunities in Britain upon demobilisation, used their connections within the officer corps to obtain positions within colonial government.<sup>111</sup> This combination of merit and patronage reflects the development of the meritocratic system in Britain. As shown by Penelope Corfield, meritocracy and a concomitant sense of professionalism grew within the

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<sup>106</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier*, p. 114.

<sup>107</sup> McCormack, *The Independent Man*, p. 15.

<sup>108</sup> Wood, *The Rambles of Rebury Rook*, p. 134.

<sup>109</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern Officer*, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 239-400.

<sup>111</sup> Christine Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire, c. 1820-40* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 57-9.

existing system of patronage, making distinguishing between the two difficult.<sup>112</sup> Vehemently opposed to patronage and 'aristocratic influence' on the one hand, and willing to exploit this same system when it suited their career interests, these concessions highlight the tensions between 'professional' idealism that espoused the value of merit, and the desire for promotion. This tension and apparent compromise between amateur and professional identities suggests that the extent to which notions of merit came to dominate junior officers' concepts of promotion was, ultimately, limited.

### ***War as a Trade***

Despite consternation over slow promotion rates and the use of patronage, the officers included in this study displayed careerist instincts and a dedication to the army as their career. The officers in this study were, generally, willing to serve for long periods. Cookson suggested that only one in eight officers left the army within five years during the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>113</sup> The officers in this study were long serving. Excluding the six officers who died on active service, these officers served an average of nearly 21 years before retiring by choice or through demobilisation. For the period up to 1820, the officers in this study had served an average of nearly twelve-and-a-half years. These lengthy periods of service suggest that the officers in this study were willing to persevere with their military careers. In this regard, these officers were mirroring their eighteenth-century predecessors. In his study of the training of the eighteenth-century army, J.A. Houlding noted that the majority of regimental officers were careerist and long serving, and 'got by on steady, competent service.'<sup>114</sup>

The careerism of the officers in this study was not just the product of military tradition, but was influenced by a peer culture which encouraged duty, and by the determination of officers to forge a successful military career. Kennedy argued that a willingness to share in the hardships of campaign and battle were the main qualifiers for officers being accepted by their peers.<sup>115</sup> In addition to these factors, it appears that junior officers demanded application to duty from their comrades. Cocks criticised his comrades in a letter to his cousin:

English officers come out eager to fight, are disappointed if an action does not immediately take place and anxious to get home after it is over. They forget that the objects of the campaign are oftener accomplished by patience and perseverance than by the most brilliant success. They seem not to consider that they have

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<sup>112</sup> Corfield, *Power and the Profession*, pp. 210-1.

<sup>113</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 29.

<sup>114</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army*, p. 115.

<sup>115</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 44.

voluntarily entered the service and are receiving the pay of their country and that unless they perform what is required of them cheerfully, to the best of their ability, they are not doing their duty.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly, Thomas Bunbury, then a captain with the Portuguese service, recalled an officer of the Hussars with whom he shared a transport to Britain. Bunbury described the officer as: 'the most ineffable coxcomb I ever met with ... The Hussar soon let out that he had obtained leave to quit the d ---- d country, and that on his arrival in England he would leave the service, which was not fit for a person who had the means of living in ease and independence at home.'<sup>117</sup> Bunbury took issue with the officer, and advised the hussar: 'that there might be in the boat persons not very affluent, and yet who, I hoped, were influenced by higher and more soldier-like feelings.'<sup>118</sup>

Junior officers were quick to deride unwilling comrades as 'amateurs'. While the term 'amateur' has been used by historians to describe the manner in which British officers approached their profession, as well as Britain's predilection for citizen soldiers over standing armies, junior officers may have attached a different meaning to the term.<sup>119</sup> Corfield has highlighted how the term 'amateur' was applied during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries to members of a profession who lacked dedication and collective spirit.<sup>120</sup> Junior officers nominated officers who arrived at the front seemingly more interested in the glamour of military life than with daily duty. Rous of the Coldstream Guards commented on a new arrival in the Peninsula who had transferred from a home service cavalry regiment in a letter to his mother: 'he was looking very well and was in high spirits at the idea of being on service, no doubt he will soon cool.'<sup>121</sup> Throughout letters home from the Peninsula, Mills, also of the Coldstream Guards, mocked fellow subalterns to his uncle for their military fervour and lack of dedication: 'Numerous amateurs have visited us, but their curiosity is soon satisfied.'<sup>122</sup> Mills' criticisms were also directed at individuals, hinting at the coercive power of the officer corps: 'I am much amused by Taylor's zeal and shall be much mistaken if his return be not as precipitate, as his advance. A bivouac in a wet night would settle his ardour.'<sup>123</sup> Mills revisited Taylor nearly three months later in another letter: 'I never saw a regular soldier more sick of it and considering he is an amateur, has obtained a wonderful victory over himself, or rather over his military ardour, for

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<sup>116</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 18 Oct. 1809, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 40.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran: Being Personal and Military Adventures*, Vol. I (London, 1861), pp. 170-1.

<sup>118</sup> Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, p. 171.

<sup>119</sup> For example, Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester, 1991).

<sup>120</sup> Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, p. 203.

<sup>121</sup> Ensign John Rous, 6 Oct. 1813, in Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 80.

<sup>122</sup> Ensign John Mills, 10 Dec. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>123</sup> Ensign John Mills, 27 Aug. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 63.

he seems now to have given up all idea of turning soldier.'<sup>124</sup> The quickness of the officers considered by this study to criticise their comrades is suggestive as to their careerist impulses. Furthermore, such terms were most frequently used within, or applied to, elite regiments, such as the Guards or cavalry. This correlation indicates that these regiments attracted officers who were invested in the army only so far as an object of curiosity.

While junior officers could be disheartened by their lack of personal autonomy and the slow promotion rates in the army, they could also confront these problems with substantial resolve. In their study of gentry masculinities, Henry French and Mark Rothery highlighted how young men from land-owning families who entered into an apprenticeship often complained of their loss of autonomy.<sup>125</sup> Young apprentices in this situation, however, often met this loss of independence with a stoic acceptance of their situation, and resolved to persevere with their career.<sup>126</sup> Junior officers appear to have approached their careers with a similar resolve. Despite writing to his family that the army was: 'the worst profession that any young man can follow', he nevertheless vowed to continue with it, for having 'been in four years now it becomes me to persevere and I think it improper being indetermined.'<sup>127</sup> Aitchison believed he was too accustomed to the military to succeed elsewhere, and confessed in his journal two years later: 'it would become *me* to persevere in and endeavour to overcome all difficulties, to promotion, for I am quite unacquainted with business, and now weaned from the necessary habits.'<sup>128</sup> Aitchison certainly fulfilled these ambitions. He would serve with the army until his death in 1877, after achieving the rank of general. Other officers expressed similar sentiments. Faced with slow promotion in his regiment, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison wrote to his mother: 'I shall content myself in going on in the same jog trot way and trust myself to your usual doctrine, "Who knows, something may turn up." It is almost time, the 7<sup>th</sup> next month completes my time, six years' service in this Corps. It will then fast approach seven years.'<sup>129</sup>

Junior officers often highlighted their reliance on their military careers. Often designating themselves as 'soldiers of fortune', officers of lesser financial means and sons who could not expect to inherit land associated their career with their livelihood, strengthening their identification with the army as a profession. Officers from lower backgrounds were aware that they did not conform to the archetype of the 'natural' leaders of the aristocracy or gentry, yet were determined to continue their career. William Thornton Keep, an officer from a middling

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<sup>124</sup> Ensign John Mills, 13 Nov. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 88.

<sup>125</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, c. 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 115-24.

<sup>126</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 115-24.

<sup>127</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 23 Jun. 1809, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>128</sup> Ensign John Aitchison, journal, 26 Mar. 1811, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 11.

<sup>129</sup> NAM 1980-08-56, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison, 8 Feb. 1811.



family noted that: 'The career before me is one I might have chosen had I been born to titles and affluence ... but being the mere soldier of fortune without any other dependence I am now especially urged to pursue it with firmness.'<sup>130</sup> A lack of opportunities in civilian life also encouraged a sense of careerism amongst socially elite officers. As it was linked to their self-identity, many socially elite officers could see their reliance on their profession. Commenting on: 'All those who have been able have already left us' having the opportunity of another career, Mills remarked that the remaining officers were, 'chiefly soldiers by necessity.'<sup>131</sup> Reflecting on a fellow officer leaving the Coldstream Guards during the Peninsular War, Rous implied that other Guards officers were dependent upon their military career: 'Bradshaw is a great loss to us; he was generally reckoned a clever, good tempered man and had he been a poor man without any other prospect than his profession, would have made a good officer.'<sup>132</sup>

This reliance also made officers concerned about what would happen in the event of peace. Insecurities feature in officers' letters home to their families, with many expressing a concern about the permanency of their career. During the eighteenth-century, the British army had a tradition of expanding rapidly to meet the demands of war, and then being demobilised and contracting in size upon the advent of peace.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, as highlighted earlier, junior officers saw a correlation between service and fast promotion. As such, junior officers expressed concerns about potential peace or defeat derailing their military career. Bridgeman wrote home from the Peninsula in 1813: 'what will become of us soldiers, if there is a peace; I fear promotion will then stand still in the regiment.'<sup>134</sup> Career officers were anxious about government instability, fearing that it would result in a peace treaty with France, particularly following the Peace of Amiens in 1802. In late 1809, ministerial resignations left Britain without an effective government, until Spencer Perceval was appointed Prime Minister on 30 September.<sup>135</sup> Lieutenant Rice Jones of the Royal Engineers was concerned about this instability, and wrote to his father in early November 1809: 'We cannot imagine what will become of us amidst all the changes etc; which are taking place.'<sup>136</sup> In his next letter, he implored his father to send news of the governmental changes: 'I am very much obliged for the news you give me; you cannot imagine how eager we all are to know what is going on in England; our fate will depend, I suppose in great measure upon the stability of the ministry. If you are in London, will you have

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<sup>130</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 30 Aug. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 90.

<sup>131</sup> Ensign John Mills, 10 Aug. 1812, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 193.

<sup>132</sup> Ensign John Rous, 01 Nov. 1812, in Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 39.

<sup>133</sup> Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006), p. 58.

<sup>134</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 17 Apr. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 102.

<sup>135</sup> Denis Gray, *Spencer Perceval: The Evangelical Prime Minister, 1762-1812* (Manchester, 1963), p. 254.

<sup>136</sup> Lieutenant Rice Jones, 11 Nov. 1809, in Rice Jones, *An Engineer Officer under Wellington in the Peninsula*, ed. H.V. Shore (Cambridge, 1986), p. 47.

the goodness to see if it is possible to send me a weekly newspaper.'<sup>137</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards wrote to a friend in late 1814: 'Selfishly speaking, I am bitterly grieved at the termination of the war, and of consequence at the total extinction of all my hopes of promotion.'<sup>138</sup>

Even officers who showed signs of war-weariness could display a concern for their career at the advent of peace. Following a harrowing engagement on the Nive in late-1813, where he was placed under fire for an extended period, Hennell appeared willing to go on half-pay and wrote to his brothers in the aftermath:

Peace is now I think fairly beyond doubt & it is likely to be speedy & soon. The half-pay monster is staring some of us lieutenants in the face again. However, I heartily wish for it. I have seen the dreadful calamities of war & I find soldiers feel much less for themselves than their friends feel for them.<sup>139</sup>

Having seemingly reconciled to life without his commission, Hennell applied for a transfer to his regiment's second battalion, then serving in England, and which was likely to be demobilised in the event of peace. Less than a month later, however, Hennell was working towards an exchange which would secure his post-peace career: 'the oldest and most experienced officers say that there is no doubt that, in case of a peace, the officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> batt. would have to go on half-pay & it was thought by most that I might get into another regiment for £100 or £150 or I might get into a single batt. regiment & then I should not go on half-pay.'<sup>140</sup> The sense that officers were reliant on their military careers, coupled with a determination to preserve their position, suggests that many officers identified closely with the army as a career.

### ***Professional Gentlemanliness***

'Careerism' is not synonymous with 'professionalism', and an important distinction must be drawn between the two. As demonstrated, junior officers could display strong careerist tendencies; however, this does not necessarily indicate that junior officers were assiduous in advancing their professional abilities. Influenced by the enlightenment emphasis on attaining knowledge, the eighteenth century was a period of professionalisation for European armies. As highlighted by Christopher Duffy, eighteenth-century European armies were beginning to value

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<sup>137</sup> Lieutenant Rice Jones, 16 Dec. 1809, in Jones, *An Engineer Officer under Wellington*, p. 48.

<sup>138</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 30 Dec. 1814, in Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo*, p. 94.

<sup>139</sup> Lieutenant George Hennell, 25 Nov. 1813, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 147.

<sup>140</sup> Lieutenant George Hennell, 15 Dec. 1813, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 150.

technical education for officers. On the continent, the military revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw officer training made official and standardised, with most continental nations having established military colleges for the training of infantry and cavalry officers by the 1780s.<sup>141</sup> As further argued by H.M. Scott and C. Storrs, the military revolution saw European nobles develop a set of professional qualities between 1600 and 1800 that transformed the continental nobility into 'a caste of military professionals'.<sup>142</sup> In contrast, the eighteenth-century British officer corps has not traditionally been associated with professionalism. Eighteenth-century British officers did not require any formal training before they joined their regiments, a trend which continued into the Napoleonic Wars. Duffy highlighted how contemporaries from the continent were critical of British officers, and noted their inattention to duty and knowledge.<sup>143</sup> Roger Norman Buckley was critical of the professional standards of British officers, suggesting that most officers saw their careers as incidental, and did not recognise the army as a vocation.<sup>144</sup> Cookson argued that the British officer corps of the Napoleonic Wars only had a loose structure of professionalism, while Kennedy has suggested that the 'gentlemanly amateur' ethos of the British officer corps, which emphasised an officer's deportment over his professional ability, predominated to the end of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>145</sup>

The British officer corps, however, was on an upwards trajectory of professionalisation during the eighteenth-century. Ira Gruber suggested that the eighteenth-century saw a growing recognition of the army as a profession in Britain, with the effect that officers became increasingly aware of their responsibility to the state and to their profession.<sup>146</sup> Stephen Conway has argued that British officers belonged to 'military Europe', and shared in many of the same values as their continental counterparts.<sup>147</sup> The eighteenth century and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era saw significant structural reforms to the British army, which could encourage professionalism. A military academy for the training of artillery and engineering officers was established at Woolwich in 1741, while the first formal academy for training infantry, cavalry, and staff officers, the Royal Military College at High and Low Wycombe, was

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<sup>141</sup> Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London, 1987), p. 48.

<sup>142</sup> H.M. Scott and Christopher Storrs, 'The Military Revolution and the European Nobility, c. 1600-1800', *War in History*, 3 (1996), p. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Duffy, *The Military Experience*, p. 32.

<sup>144</sup> Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies*, p. 339.

<sup>145</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 28; Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', p. 130.

<sup>146</sup> Ira Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 2010), pp. 24-5.

<sup>147</sup> Stephen Conway, 'The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 67 (2010), pp. 69-100; Stephen Conway, 'The Eighteenth-Century British Army as a European Institution', in *Britain's Soldiers*, pp. 17-38.

established in 1799.<sup>148</sup> Infantry drill was standardised in the 1792 general regulations, which were based on Dundas' critique of infantry drill and tactics in his 1788 *Principles of Military Movements*, while, as noted in Chapter One, the British officer corps underwent structural reform during the 1790s.<sup>149</sup> As argued by Cookson, viewing the professionalisation of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British officer corps purely in structural terms is fraught.<sup>150</sup> It is important, therefore, to explore how junior officers approached professional aims. What emerges from officer accounts is the sense that the military demanded a degree of professionalism; at least to the extent that officers should be devoted to learning the standardised drill of the army. Tempering this notion was the view that officers should approach the army in the manner of a dilettante, highlighting how notions of 'gentlemanly amateurism' were still central to junior officers' professional identities.

There is evidence to suggest that structural reforms of the British army encouraged officers to become more professional in their approach. John Blakiston, having had a commission purchased for him in a newly raised regiment in 1793 at the age of nine, noted how this gave him no professional impetus:

I had no occasion, like other boys, to study for a profession which I had already attained, I could in no way discover either what use *musa* or *musae* could be to me as a soldier. While in this mood the Duke of York's regulations, prohibiting school-boys from holding commissions in the army, came out; and my military pride was lowered a peg or two by my being placed on half-pay.<sup>151</sup>

Blakiston's reduction appears to have encouraged him to pursue his military career more closely, as he applied himself judiciously throughout his later service with the East India Company and the Portuguese army. Similarly, the standardisation of drill appears to have had some influence on how junior officers conceived of their duties. Joining the Portuguese service and being responsible for the training of a Portuguese company forced Bunbury to learn infantry drill:

After attending the drill parades, and paying especial notice to what was going on, I employed myself on returning to my billet by referring to my notes on the King's regulations for this period; and for the first time I became to understand Dundas.

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<sup>148</sup> Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, p. 53. Houlding, *Fit for Service*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>149</sup> Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 242; Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions', pp. 229-31; Glover, *Peninsular Preparation*, p. 152.

<sup>150</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 28.

<sup>151</sup> John Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe*, Vol. I (London, 1829), pp. 5-6.

Prior to this, I considered it a very stupid book, and beyond all comprehension. I went even further and translated into Portuguese the *eighteen* manoeuvres, which afterwards became very generally circulated through the Portuguese army.<sup>152</sup>

As a newly commissioned ensign in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot, Hennell devoted himself assiduously to drill, writing to his brothers: 'As a soldier I have much to learn. I am still at drill & as I see the propriety of it, it gives me pleasure.'<sup>153</sup>

Together with the requirement that junior officers be schooled in the rudiments of military professionalism was a concurrent strain of self-education and improvement. Enshrined in the writings of enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and David Hume, British enlightenment thought placed a great deal of emphasis on self-reflection, self-awareness and individualism.<sup>154</sup> As products of the enlightenment world, junior officers' approaches to their military education reflect the impact of British intellectual thought on British society. The expanding print culture of the eighteenth-century made increasing numbers and styles of books available to willing readers. Reading was associated with enlightenment concepts of the 'self', and was seen as a vehicle to self-knowledge and improvement.<sup>155</sup> While print culture reached down the social ladder, it became a potent cultural symbol and was considered a sign of one's gentility.<sup>156</sup> The military was not left untouched by the cultural phenomenon of reading. As revealed by Gruber, books were central to the professionalisation of the army during the eighteenth century, as the military hierarchy used books to disseminate regulations and practices, while individual officers read widely as a means of improving their knowledge on warfare.<sup>157</sup>

Junior British officers, both at home and abroad, were avid readers. Officers read periodical army lists and the *London Gazette* to find out information about promotions, while also requesting newspapers, books and periodicals from family members in letters home. Reading also coloured officers' experiences of war, as the books they read influenced their opinions about what they encountered while abroad.<sup>158</sup> Any dearth of books was often lamented by officers on campaign. It was officers with additional sources of income, therefore, who were best placed to benefit from books. During his time in the Peninsula, Cocks requested various titles from his family. These included works of fiction, such as Shakespearian plays and *Robinson Crusoe*; educational books on mathematics, history and literature; and, importantly: 'Any new

<sup>152</sup> Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, Vol. I, p. 54.

<sup>153</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 16 Oct. 1812, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 52.

<sup>154</sup> Benet Davetian, *Civility: A Cultural History* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 84-97.

<sup>155</sup> Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, 2000), pp. 276-94.

<sup>156</sup> John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), pp. 189-90.

<sup>157</sup> Gruber, *Books and the British Army*, especially chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>158</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 9-10.

military book that stands high.’<sup>159</sup> Reading had recognisable outcomes. Cocks’ journals include long reflections on military works he had read, debating their worth and potential permutations. Regimental cultures also played a part in fostering professionalism. Lessons learnt from books could be disseminated beyond the individual reader. Bell noted how captains in the Peninsula often carried ‘company books’ which were read by the captain and his subalterns.<sup>160</sup> An emphasis on polite accomplishment, therefore, intertwined with professional identities. Self-education was not limited to reading. Desiring a staff position owing to increased opportunities for ‘observation and promotion’, Browne took it upon himself to learn Spanish upon being posted to the Peninsula in 1809, as he: ‘thought it more probable that officers acquainted with it, would be sought for, and brought forward, and the result proved that I was correct in this.’<sup>161</sup>

Junior officers, however, saw a fine line between studying tactics to enlarge knowledge, and a pedantic obsession with the minutiae of military drill and tactics. Gentility implied a set of attributes, such as alacrity of thought, bravery and self-mastery, which, it was conceived, gave British officers the capacity to meet the demands of officership, and to learn from experience.<sup>162</sup> As revealed by Philip Carter in his study of polite masculinity, placing too much emphasis on learning was seen to inculcate pedantry in men, which posed a threat to the perceived benefits of polite accomplishment.<sup>163</sup> The tension between the necessity of a degree of professional knowledge and, a concern over the impacts of pedantry, is reflected in junior officers’ writings. Blakiston advocated for a liberal, rather than a specialised education for officers: ‘I am aware that British officers are not so much instructed in the theory of their profession as those of other armies, but that is, in my opinion, a matter of little consequence. Generally speaking the best education for an officer is that which will make him the best citizen.’<sup>164</sup> The letters of Edward Charles Cocks are especially revealing as to the tensions that existed between polite gentlemanliness and professionalism. Cocks was regularly employed by Wellington on intelligence duties in the Peninsula and, his talent was celebrated throughout the army. Upon hearing of Cocks’ death at the 1812 siege of Burgos, for example, Captain Arthur Shakespear of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards described Cocks as: ‘a brilliant officer’, while Cocks’ regimental comrade Lieutenant William Tomkinson described him as: ‘one of the most distinguished officers of the

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<sup>159</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 22 Dec. 1810, in Cocks, *An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 96.

<sup>160</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 81.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), pp. 124-5.

<sup>162</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society: England, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 70-1.

<sup>163</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, p. 71.

<sup>164</sup> Blakiston, *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure*, Vol. II, p. 371.

time.<sup>165</sup> Asked for advice on military careers by his uncle, Cocks also warned against the dangers of over-education in his reply: 'I dislike Marlow. Boys there either become disgusted with duty and on joining break loose into all manners of idleness and extravagance of behaviour, or they learn to be military pedants and despise the advice of those who, though they do not step just 30 inches every pace, know how to fight their enemy when they must meet them in the field.'<sup>166</sup> Instead, Cocks advocated a gentlemanly education:

I like to see a young man on first joining his regiment with the air of a gentleman and not of a serjeant-major ... A mind free from prejudices, impressed with liberal and philanthropic ideas, love of his profession and emulation in it, with a sufficient ease of behaviour to render himself at home in society which is strange to him, will enable a young man to distinguish himself in the army much sooner than having Dundas and even Tempelhoff by heart.<sup>167</sup>

Cocks also saw these traits as distinctly British, as he derided German officers as 'blockheads'. Britain's place within 'military Europe' has been the subject of scholarly debate. Conway argued that national differences between British and continental officers were overridden by a collective sense of professional belonging.<sup>168</sup> Mark Wishon, however, has revealed how mutual respect between British and German officers was also coloured by the stereotype of Germans as boorish and dour.<sup>169</sup> Cocks' views on German officers suggest that he fell into the latter category, as he criticised German officers in his diary: 'Usually ill-educated, their minds are confined to their profession ... They make capital subalterns and captains, but know too much for power and their views are not sufficiently enlarged for high command.'<sup>170</sup>

Junior officers, therefore, developed a sense of professionalism which advocated a degree of professional knowledge that was still overshadowed by the trappings of gentlemanly amateurism. This was not the only conflict which characterised junior officers' relationship to the 'profession of arms'. Often entering the army after being seduced by the glamour and supposed liberty of a military career, subalterns in particular could find military careers unfulfilling, as they were subjected to the military hierarchy and condemned to years at a low

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<sup>165</sup> NAM 1977-06-17 Arthur Shakespear, 'Memoirs, Letters, and Journals of Captain Arthur Shakespear'; William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular War and Waterloo Campaign, 1809-1815*, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1895), p. 211.

<sup>166</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Oct. 1811, in Cocks, *An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 153.

<sup>167</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 153.

<sup>168</sup> Conway, 'The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence', pp. 69-100;

<sup>169</sup> Mark Wishon, *German Forces and the British Army: Interactions and Perceptions, 1742-1815* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 17-42.

<sup>170</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, journal, 22 Jul. 1811, in Cocks, *An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 129.

rank owing to often sluggish promotion rates. There is the sense, however, that junior officers saw their time as junior officers as something of an apprenticeship. This view saw officers develop careerist instincts, which saw them approach the challenges of the army with determination and perseverance. This combination of factors suggests that junior officers could come to closely identify with their profession, if not while abandoning the 'gentlemanly amateur' ethos of the British officer corps.



## Chapter Four: Regiments, Family, and Friends

In an 1811 letter to his father, Captain Edward Charles Cocks declared: 'I beg leave to be understood permanently to resign all wish to be in Parliament. I wish to be a soldier and all a soldier and only a soldier.'<sup>1</sup> Evidently, Cocks saw soldiering as a career which demanded full devotion from an individual, devotion which was irreconcilable with his additional role as a parliamentarian. In a later letter to his uncle offering advice on military careers, Cocks acknowledged that this devotion was not a given, but developed over time: 'Amid the many hundred young men of spirit who compose the officers of our army, I meet with very few who are soldiers in their heart. Thank God, however, that number is fast increasing for those who have come out boys have grown up in the military habit.'<sup>2</sup> In the same letter, Cocks suggested that an officer should prioritise the military aspects of his life, and devote himself to his comrades as he would his family. Cocks' views suggest that he saw considerable tension, if not incompatibility, between military and family identities: 'A soldier must regard his regiment ... as his home. He must sigh after no particular spot and no particular country. If allowed to visit his family he must call it *going out* on pleasure.'<sup>3</sup> Cocks' deep, almost obsessive, commitment to his soldierly identity was certainly exceptional. His declarations, however, touch on several features of junior officers' relationships with their regiments and families.

This chapter explores two broad themes. The first theme is that of junior officers' relationship to their regiments. Junior officers could form collective identities centred on the regiment, the institutions which framed officers' careers. A regiment's officers was the primary social group an officer interacted with, with the regiment regularly alluded to as a 'family', while regimental conduct was the prism through which an officer's honour and reputation were judged by the public.<sup>4</sup> Camaraderie and the maintenance of regimental honour were essential to the formation of regimental identities: bonds of friendship ensured that an officer was happily situated in a regiment and an honourable reputation encouraged officers to enhance a regiment's esteem and to reflect upon a regiment with a sense of pride. The absence of these values stymied regimental identities; however, their presence did not guarantee an inflexible regimental identity. Bonds formed through comradeship and honour could be re-built as officers transferred between regiments, while officers were also preoccupied with gaining promotion, a situation which encouraged fluid regimental identities.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Charles Cocks, 15 Sep. 1811, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812*, ed. Julia Page (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Charles Cocks, 10 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer*, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Charles Cocks, 10 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer*, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 83-4.

The second theme of this chapter is junior officers' family identities. Regimental identities existed alongside, rather than in direct opposition to, officers' civilian identities. Particularly for young or married officers, military service meant being removed from family, separated either by barrack life or by overseas service. Tensions certainly arose from this separation and junior officers expressed regular anxiety at being forgotten by family members in Britain. Perhaps because of this fear of estrangement, junior officers were adept at maintaining their family relationships. Letters were a critical medium for maintaining familial bonds. They bridged the gap between combatant and non-combatant by acting as a physical reminder of the relationship between officers and their families, while also rendering the military experience relatable to a civilian audience.<sup>5</sup> There were also families who contrived to unite the civilian and military worlds, as some officers took their wives and children on campaign, and brothers fought alongside each other. The maintenance of two 'family' identities, one military and the other civil, speaks to the flexibility of the Georgian officer's character, striding the line between the army and civilian society.

### ***The Regimental Family***

Recent scholarship has revealed much about the relationship between armies and civilian societies during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. David Bell, for example, has argued that the Napoleonic Wars created the perception of distinct 'military' and 'civilian' spheres.<sup>6</sup> An important dimension to this scholarship has been the study of combatants' transition from 'civilian' to 'soldier'. As emphasised by Yuval Noah Harari, combatants' interpretations of military life fundamentally altered during the Romantic period. Soldier-memoirists began to focus on individual experiences of war, such as basic training and their baptism of fire, which were evaluated in terms of their impact on the individual.<sup>7</sup> A central feature of these narratives was the transformation of civilians into 'soldiers', a process which could render individuals unrecognisable to their family.<sup>8</sup> The experience of British soldiers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, who were increasingly housed in barracks instead of being billeted on civilians, suggests that the gap between soldiers and civilians would become more pronounced during this period. Focusing on this physical separation of the army from society, Catriona Kennedy explored the problematic and conflicting entry of British officers and soldiers into the army as they adapted to leaving home, the isolation

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<sup>5</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>6</sup> David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Modern Warfare* (London, 2007), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), pp. 213-4.

<sup>8</sup> Harari, *The Ultimate Experience*, pp. 213-31.

of barrack life, comradeship, adjustment to the honour code of the officer corps, and being subjected to the authority of superior officers.<sup>9</sup>

As the British army was organised along regimental, rather than general lines, the primary institution in which junior officers' military experiences occurred was the regiment. The other officers in the regiment were often referred to as an officer's 'family'. In a letter to his mother, Keep summarised the relationship between the officers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot: 'I have found brothers in the officers to whom I have become attached as such, and Colonel Ross' treatment of us has acquired the appellation of a father.'<sup>10</sup> As highlighted by Naomi Tadmor and Amanda Vickery, the eighteenth-century British family was a fluid construct defined by the boundaries of patriarchal authority. The dependents included within that circle of authority, such as children, servants, or co-resident relatives, were considered to be a part of the patriarch's family.<sup>11</sup> Influenced by the cult of sensibility, late-eighteenth-century British family life also had an increased focus on close bonds between family members, marked by outward displays of affection.<sup>12</sup> Both of these conceptions of the family had currency with junior officers. Describing their regiments as family spoke to junior officers' conception of the hierarchical structure of the regiment, the domestic setting of the regiment as an officer's 'home', where he slept, ate and socialised, and to the relationships contained therein, which were often described in terms of father and brotherhood. Often absent from their families, a junior officers' regimental comrades became a network of support, compensating for the lack of direct contact with family.

Comparing their regiments to a family allowed junior officers to conceive of the hierarchical organisation of the regiment, particularly the central, paternalistic authority of commanding officers. Although the British state gained more control of regiments during the eighteenth century, colonels retained personal responsibility for the financial management of regiments, the training of men and officers, the regimental uniform, and the maintenance of cohesion and

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<sup>9</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 41-8.

<sup>10</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Aug. 1812, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsula, 1808-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1997), p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (New York, NY, 2001), pp. 18-28; Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT, 2009), pp. 184-5.

<sup>12</sup> G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, IL, 1992), pp. 101-3; Joanne Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting in Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 219-23; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 69-100; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 221-2.

morale.<sup>13</sup> The sense of ownership this control bestowed continued into the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Patterson described the relationship between his colonel and the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot: 'the regiment was his home, the officers and soldiers were his family.'<sup>14</sup> As noted by John Cookson, interpreting regimental hierarchies as the imposition of rank obscures the nuanced relationships which comprised regimental authority.<sup>15</sup> As shown in Chapter Three, junior officers were more comfortable with taking orders from superiors who treated them with a degree of gentlemanly respect. With regards to their regimental commanders junior officers expected a degree of paternal warmth and guidance, with respected commanders sometimes described as 'fathers'. By the late-eighteenth century, fathers from polite backgrounds were expected to be emotionally engaged with their children and make conscientious displays of affection, while continuing in their traditional roles as disciplinarians and material providers.<sup>16</sup> It was these values which junior officers found endearing in commanders. Describing his colonel in a letter to his mother, Bridgeman focused on his colonel's benevolence: 'It is impossible for me to express the all the kindness I have received from Colonel Lambert ... all the officers are very civil & kind, but Colonel Lambert is just what I should expect from my nearest relations.'<sup>17</sup> As highlighted by Kennedy, being subjected to the authority of superior officers could be an affront to junior officers' sense of independence.<sup>18</sup> When administered with respect and warmth, however, the imposition of authority was not an impediment to a relationship between commanding and junior officers. Despite being severely reproached for not powdering his hair before breakfast, Bowlby still respected his first colonel: 'Of all the Commanding Officers I ever had ... I admired him the most. He was a strict disciplinarian.'<sup>19</sup> After breaching leave regulations, Keep wrote to his mother than he was thankful his colonel: 'behaved in the kindest manner to me, gently reprimanding me for my conduct.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Alan J. Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and Administration in the British Army, 1714-63* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 12, 137-57; Andrew Bamford, *Sickness Suffering and the Sword: The British Regiment on Campaign, 1808-1815* (Norman, OK, 2013), pp. 60-3;

<sup>14</sup> John Patterson, *The Adventures of Captain John Patterson* (London, 1837), p. 407.

<sup>15</sup> John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 219-23; Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, pp. 69-100.

<sup>17</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 10 Jun. 1812, in Orlando Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War: The Letters of Captain The Honourable Orlando Bridgeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettelle, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 131-3.

<sup>19</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Peter Bowlby', pp. 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 30 Nov. 1811, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 73.

The familial explanation of the regiment also applied to horizontal relationships between junior officers. The relationships possible between 'brother officers' were broad: eighteenth-century terms of kinship could connote affection; however, their usage could also reflect the expectation of solidarity, support, and duty, without the suggestion of close friendship.<sup>21</sup> Brotherhood as conceived by junior officers followed both of these strands, as they identified a sense of fraternity provided by belonging to the same regiment, while also using the language of sensibility to describe their friendships with one another.<sup>22</sup> Fraternal values appear to have been largely contained within the regiment. While junior officers socialised beyond their regiments, the term 'brother officer' was, almost exclusively, applied to present or former regimental comrades. This suggests that a broad sense of military and national fraternity, such as that identified in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic French armies by Brian Joseph Martin, was not as advanced amongst British junior officers.<sup>23</sup> Affiliation within a regimental structure could quickly form a sense of belonging. After less than two weeks with the 77<sup>th</sup> Foot, Keep wrote to his mother: 'I have been making wonderful progress ... in becoming acquainted not only with the routine of my duties, but with my brother officers, as I may now call them.'<sup>24</sup> Shared experiences of barrack and campaign life fostered close friendships which, in turn, created a sense of comradeship between a regiment's junior officers.<sup>25</sup> For young ensigns, the advice of experienced officers, especially captains, was welcomed. Keep described a young captain of his new regiment as: 'a most excellent character to form a friendship with.'<sup>26</sup> Having received some dress advice from a captain of the Coldstream, Blackman relayed his appreciation to his parents: 'I consider Captain Lascelles as my friend, he has had some experience.'<sup>27</sup>

Generally young, subalterns formed bonds through shared activities of youthful exuberance, including exercise, games, and rabble-rousing. Thomas Bunbury recalled his time as an ensign in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot, where practical jokes were so rife every officer had to keep his bedroom door locked.<sup>28</sup> The main target of these jokes highlights the importance of youth to this culture:

I was very mischievous; and an officer in the regiment was but too frequently the object of my pranks. He was a very studious character, had passed his examination

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<sup>21</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 140-5.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Knott, 'Sensibility and the American War for Independence', *American Historical Review*, 109 (2004), pp. 31-2.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Joseph Martin *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, & Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France* (Durham, NH, 2011), pp. 19-39.

<sup>24</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Nov. 1808, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Nov. 1808, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ensign John Lucie Blackman, 24 Feb. 1812, in John Lucie Blackman, *'It all Culminated at Hougoumont': The Letters of Captain John Lucie Blackman, Coldstream Guards, 1812-15* (Huntingdon, 2009), p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran: Being Personal and Military Adventures*, Vol. I (London, 1861), p. 8.

with credit at the Military College, and had been a long time in the regiment. As a matter of course, he was voted a great bore and a stupid fellow; and on these assumptions, we took delight in smoking the 'old fox' as he was termed.<sup>29</sup>

Having briefly retired to half-pay after falling ill at Walcheren, Keep returned to service with the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot. While garrisoned at Berry Head barracks, Keep took to swimming, cliff climbing, and other exercises with his fellow subalterns. In a letter to his brother, Keep highlighted how the shared danger of these activities brought the subalterns closer together as: 'a family of officers united ... by association in our daily amusements and pursuits, engaged in the same glorious cause, of the same Regiment and age, dining at one board, and partaking equally in all the vicissitudes incidental to such a precarious life.'<sup>30</sup>

Shared campaign experiences reinforced comradeship. The dangers and hardships of battle and campaign could, quite literally, bring officers together. Recalling the failed 1814 attack on Bergen-Op-Zoom, Lieutenant John Dunbar-Moodie of the 21<sup>st</sup> Foot described how their situation, sheltering from cannon fire behind a pile of logs, and wet through, forced officers to huddle together: 'During one of these intervals of stillness, exhausted with our exertions, and the cold we felt in our drenched clothes, some of the officers and I lay down along the parapet together, in hopes of borrowing a little heat from each other.'<sup>31</sup> The willingness to endure hardships together was interpreted as a sign of solidarity with one's comrades. Having just returned to his regiment from a stint on staff duty, Cocks wrote to his uncle:

Regimental service is, in my opinion, always preferable to staff employments. Recollect that a staff man shirks all hardship, and while his comrades are snoring in their cloaks under the canopy of the sky or perhaps on picquet, not daring to sleep for twenty-four or forty-eight hours together, my friend on the staff is undressed and lying snug between sheets.<sup>32</sup>

Hardships shared in common required mutual support, which reflected devotion to one another and cemented friendships. As shown by Kennedy, junior officers expended considerable effort in domesticising their barracks to better reflect their ideals of comfort, while shared domestic pleasures helped to build bonds between officers.<sup>33</sup> The ritual of dining together on campaign highlights the importance of shared domestic pleasures to forming and maintaining friendships

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<sup>29</sup> Bunbury, *Reminiscences*, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 7 Aug. 1812, 27 Aug. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, pp. 82-3, 88.

<sup>31</sup> John W. Dunbar Moodie, 'Narrative of the Campaign in Holland in 1814, with Details of the Attack on Bergen-Op-Zoom', in *Memoirs of the Late War*, Vol. II (London, 1831), p. 290.

<sup>32</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 30 Aug. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer*, p. 136.

<sup>33</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 43-4.

between officers. Regimental messes were often impractical on campaign; yet junior officers still insisted on dining together in small groups, usually centred on a company. The necessity of pooling meagre resources forced officers in these groups to rely upon each other for material support during testing periods. At the 1809 siege of Flushing, Lieutenant John Garbutt of the 84<sup>th</sup> Foot and the other officers of his company combined and shared their alcohol and food, which they were obliged to: 'either buy or steal as we can'.<sup>34</sup> Embarking with the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot for the Peninsula, Lieutenant Charles Crowe agreed to mess for the duration with a comrade, Radcliffe, who knew Spanish, was a renowned scrounger, and had been excluded from his company's mess. In return, Crowe supplied utensils, as Radcliffe had none. The outcome of this arrangement was a: 'warm friendship between Radcliffe and me, which remained unbroken until the regiment was disbanded.'<sup>35</sup> Describing a period of debilitating sickness in the Peninsula, Lieutenant Moyle Sherer of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot employed the language of sensibility to express the type of care he received from his comrades, who offered consolation by: 'affectionate pressures of the hand' and by speaking 'in the manly yet feeling language of encouragement.'<sup>36</sup> As highlighted by Sarah Knott, the language of sensibility had provided American officers with terms to describe the 'brotherly friendship' of the American officer corps during the American War of Independence, and to the fraternal unity of the officer corps.<sup>37</sup> Sherer's use of similar language to describe homo-social bonds in the British officer corps further highlights how reciprocal care underpinned the brotherhood of the British officer corps. The death or departure of comrades provoked poignant reflections on regimental friendships. Returning to Portugal in mid-1812 after eighteen months' leave, Lieutenant John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards came across his regiment in a village where they had been quartered during 1809, only to find the town's picturesque houses and trees destroyed, and his regiment much changed. Aitchison recorded in his diary:

I became melancholy ... enough to draw a tear of sympathy – in bringing to my remembrance some amiable men, and the many happy days I had spent with them. Such friendship is lasting, and trifles often bring to recollection incidents which at the time passed unnoticed – these often occur now ... my old friends are almost all

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<sup>34</sup> Lieutenant John Garbutt, 5 Aug. 1809, in John Garbutt, *The Walcheren Diary of Lieutenant John Garbutt, 84<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, 1809*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2015), p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 61.

<sup>36</sup> Moyle Sherer, *Recollections of the Peninsula* (London, 1825), p. 103.

<sup>37</sup> Knott, 'Sensibility', pp. 31-2.

gone, so much changed are the officers, that only *one other* and myself are now here.<sup>38</sup>

Descriptions of the death of comrades often reflected on the character and quality of the deceased person.<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant William Tomkinson of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons recorded his grief at hearing of the death of Edward Charles Cocks, who had been in the 16<sup>th</sup> with Tomkinson for nearly five years: 'in those regiments in which he has been not a man can lament a brother more than they do him ... From my first joining the 16<sup>th</sup> ... We always lived together, and had I left it to him, I should not have paid one-third of my share.'<sup>40</sup> Dead comrades could be memorialised in group or personal actions, highlighting the commitment implied by comradeship. Blakeney's description of the officers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot drinking together the night before a battle and offering anecdotes at which 'many an eye swam at the recollection of scenes and friends gone for ever' have few parallels, with acts of individual remembrance more commonly recorded: Tomkinson distributed Cocks' personal effects among his friends as mementos, while Browne collected a piece of a decapitated comrade's hair, with the intention of sending it to the deceased officer's friends as a 'sad, but very precious relic.'<sup>41</sup>

Relationships between junior officers were not without their tensions. Hierarchies existed between officers of the same rank, and could be calculated to the day using the *Army List*. The imposition or subversion of this hierarchy could produce conflict. Just as in the Georgian household, being higher in the regimental pecking order came with entitlements which signified status and control.<sup>42</sup> As his regiment, the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot, arrived in Gibraltar, Lieutenant Peter Bowlby found himself in a comfortable bunk, however his comfort did not last long: 'the next day I was told by a Captain of the Regiment that he would take possession of it and I must turn out. Captain Hill was my friend, but he said if he did not take it some other would.'<sup>43</sup> Differences in rank did not have to be wide for officers to claim superiority. Lieutenant John Malcolm of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Foot recalled an incident on board his transport ship to the Peninsula, where a young officer claimed a sleeping spot:

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<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 27 May 1812, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K Thompson (London, 1981), p. 157.

<sup>39</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 77.

<sup>40</sup> William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular War and Waterloo Campaign, 1809-1815*, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1895), p. 210.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures, and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment, An Autobiography*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), p. 210; Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 210; Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 184.

<sup>43</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Bowlby', p. 10.



A brother of the profession came up and asked him the date of his commission. Upon being informed of which, he laid claim to the berth, as being the senior. The army list was referred to, and he was found entitled to precedence, - his commission bearing date one day previous to that of the other.<sup>44</sup>

As eighty three per cent of promotions went by regimental seniority, status within the regimental hierarchy was reflective of their prospects for promotion, and promotions which circumvented this hierarchy could sting the senior party's honour.<sup>45</sup> Frustrated in his attempts at gaining a captaincy, Lieutenant Charles Kinloch of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot expressed his ambivalence to his sister at a junior lieutenant being promoted into another regiment: 'Tom Ramsay had left the 52<sup>nd</sup>, he is now a captain in the 47<sup>th</sup> and although I *rejoice* at his promotion, it is nevertheless a matter of great regret to me ... he was several steps junior to me in this regiment.'<sup>46</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards wrote to a friend on the eve of Waterloo: 'I have just had the mortification of being superseded in the command of the light infantry company by Lieutenant Colonel [Wyndham], who is about two years junior to myself in the Guards and army, and has served abroad about as many months as I have years.'<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Crowe recorded how his promotion from ensign in the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot, to lieutenant in the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot angered his new subordinates: 'On parade ... most of the lieutenants, and Ensigns Byrne and Radcliffe came forward in a body and welcomed me to the regiment, but the other ensigns kept aloof, being jealous of my having been put over their heads.'<sup>48</sup> Bonds between officers of the same regiment, therefore, were conceived of as a filial. These filial connections spoke to the acts of comradeship, care, and friendship junior officers expected from each other and their superiors. Often shorn of physical contact with their families, bonds formed within regiments could act as a substitute for these absent connections, particularly with regards to the paternalism of fathers, and the fraternity of brothers.

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<sup>44</sup> John Malcolm, 'Reminiscences of a Campaign in the Pyrenees and the South of France in 1814, in *Memorials of the Late War*, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1831), p. 237.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Glover, 'The Purchase of Commissions: A Reappraisal', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1980), p. 232.

<sup>46</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 1 Jun. 1810, in Charles Kinloch, *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, 1806-16*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2007), pp. 51-2.

<sup>47</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 14 Jun. 1815, in George Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsular and at Waterloo: The Letters of Captain George Bowles, Coldstream Guards, 1807-1819*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 97.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier: The Peninsular War Journals of Lieutenant Charles Crowe of the Inniskillings, 1812-14*, ed. Gareth Glover (Barnsley, 2011), p. 50.

### *Honour, Glory, and the Regiment*

As well as providing the framework for their lives, regiments also mediated junior officers' sense of honour. As revealed by Kennedy, individual officers' sense of honour and aspirations for glory were inherently connected to their regiment's conduct, as the reputation of a regiment was the primary lens through which the honour of officers was communicated to the wider army and the British public.<sup>49</sup> Any incident which could bring a regiment's reputation for quality or discipline into question was felt by the regiment's officers. Keep conveyed to his mother his sense of shame at his regiment having to repeat a march during the 1809 Walcheren expedition: 'Conceive how ridiculous we appeared! Luckily other regiments had as much to mourn, or we should never have recovered from the effects of it.'<sup>50</sup> Regiments did not have to be directly implicated for the fear of dishonour to creep in. Aitchison noted to his father how Wellington's wide-ranging criticism of the army following the chaotic 1812 retreat from Burgos left officers evading accusations of disorder: 'When censure is general, no one will take it to himself, and it would have been better therefore of his lordship to have marked those regiments in which "outrages and irregularity of every description were committed" than to have stigmatised the whole.'<sup>51</sup> The actions of an individual also reflected on the entire regiment, making officers wary of dishonour by association. Sitting on a court martial for a fellow ensign of the Coldstream Guards, John Rous lamented to his mother the impact the court martial could have on the Coldstream's impeccable disciplinary reputation:

I am only sorry that he exchanged into the Coldstream before the Court Martial was over, since in the four years the Guards have been in the Peninsula there has been no instance of any officer or soldier having been brought to a General Court Martial, and although everybody that chooses may know that he was not in the Guards at the time ... many of the line will not know it through envy.<sup>52</sup>

An illuminating case study of the relationship between regimental and individual honour is that of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars during 1813. During the Battle of Vitoria, officers and men of the 18<sup>th</sup> stopped to plunder French baggage rather than pursue the French. This act incensed Wellington, who described the 18<sup>th</sup> in dispatches after the battle as: 'a disgrace to the name of soldier, in action as well as elsewhere.'<sup>53</sup> Upon having Wellington's disapprobation and threat to

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<sup>49</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>50</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 18 Sep. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 63.

<sup>51</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 1 Feb. 1813, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 227.

<sup>52</sup> Ensign John Rous, 11 Apr. 1813, in John Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), pp. 52-3.

<sup>53</sup> Duke of Wellington, 29 Jun. 1813, in Duke of Wellington, *The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, ed. John Gurwood (hereafter, WD), Vol. VI (Cambridge, 2010), p. 559.

dismount the regiment and return them to Britain conveyed to the officers, Lieutenant George Woodberry felt dishonoured by his association with the regiment: 'O God is it come to this! I want language to explore the grief I feel on the occasion, to think I should have come out with a Regiment, who have contrary to all expectations acted so differently.'<sup>54</sup> Woodberry's account also reveals how their regiment's reputation was how officers' honour was communicated to the British nation. Woodberry appeared resolved to resign his commission upon Wellington's instruction that promotion would be stopped within the regiment, until he received word that the news of the 18<sup>th</sup>'s shame had been reported in Britain. Woodberry recorded in his diary that he was: 'not at all anxious about going home now I find the regiment has so bad a character in England.'<sup>55</sup>

A similarly symbiotic relationship existed between the regiment and junior officers' aspirations of glory. As highlighted by Michael Hughes in his study of military culture in Napoleon's army, the concepts of honour and glory were related but distinct concepts. Honour and glory were both reflective of an individual's reputation; however, while honour was maintained as long as an individual did not dishonour himself and could be preserved through steady service, glory was the renown associated with 'exceptional achievements'.<sup>56</sup> While British officers often used 'honour' as a synonym for 'glory', the distinction Hughes drew between the two holds true for the British army. Until the institution of the first universally awarded British battle commendation, the Waterloo Medal, it was uncommon for British rankers or junior officers to have their individual achievements acknowledged. This lack of personal recognition saw junior officers' sense of glory and esteem articulated through regimental achievements.<sup>57</sup> Generally dissatisfied with army life in 1811, Aitchison still recorded in his diary: 'I glory in having acted in deeds which have immortalised my regiment.'<sup>58</sup> George Bell of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot recalled his delight as a young ensign reading newspapers which reported his regiment's conduct at the 1811 Battle of Arroyo dos Molinos: 'wasn't I proud to see Sir Rowland Hill's despatch in print, with the few words, which never escaped my memory, viz., "where the 28<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Regiments eminently distinguished themselves"?'<sup>59</sup> These sentiments were especially strong in regiments with dashing reputations. Simmons of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles, a regiment renowned for its daring battlefield exploits wrote to his father: 'You make me blush at the idea or observation in the

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<sup>54</sup> NAM, 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 26 Jun. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 156.

<sup>55</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 5 Sep. 1813, 'The Idle Companion', p. 228.

<sup>56</sup> Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grand Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 56-7.

<sup>57</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 83.

<sup>58</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 26 Mar. 1811, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier, During Fifty Years' Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General C.B.* (London, 1867), p. 20.

letter, "*a dangerous regiment.*" My dear father, the more danger the more honour ... When I turned soldier it was not for the purpose of admiring myself like a peacock in gaudy plumage; no, it was to meet the enemies of my country and go wherever my duty called me, and merit the name of a soldier.'<sup>60</sup>

The relationship between regimental and individual notions of honour and glory encouraged officers to invest in maintaining their regiment's honour by demanding attention to duty, even if they were only temporary members. Having purchased a captaincy in the 60<sup>th</sup> Foot and awaiting a transfer back into the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons, Tomkinson still attempted to capture a deserter as: 'the only service ever attempted for the credit of my regiment.'<sup>61</sup> Tomkinson's transitory status with the 60<sup>th</sup> Foot likely limited his attachment to the regiment; however, his desire to maintain the regiment's honour alongside his own speaks to a rudimentary bond, particularly in light of Tomkinson's use of the possessive term 'my' to describe his relationship with the 60<sup>th</sup>. The desire to maintain, reclaim or enhance a regiment's reputation could stimulate officers to acts of bravery. As the prospect of battle loomed again for the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars during late 1813, Woodberry hoped for redemption: 'I trust the 18<sup>th</sup> will recover all Her former glory and add new lustre to it. I am determined if I get near them again I will fight like an Hero and will sell my life dearly if not supported. Anything I will do to regain our former character.'<sup>62</sup>

Junior officers were also responsible for the physical embodiment of their regiment's honour: the regimental colours. Regimental colours were large silk flags, the same colour as the facings on the regimental uniform, fixed onto poles, and were used as a rallying point for regiments during battle.<sup>63</sup> Battle honours were inscribed on the regimental colours, making them a potent symbol of the regiment's history, traditions, and achievements.<sup>64</sup> The most junior ensigns in a regiment were charged with carrying the colours into battle or on important occasions, creating a connection between the carrier and the regiment's honour. Carrying the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot's colours as the British landed at Copenhagen thrilled Browne, noting: 'when we planted them on the Danish shore, we had by no means an indifferent opinion of ourselves.'<sup>65</sup> Losing the colours to enemy capture during battle was considered a disgrace, occasionally spurring officers to great lengths

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<sup>60</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 30 Sep. 1810, in George Simmons, *A British Rifleman: Journals and Correspondence during the Peninsular War and the Campaign of Wellington*, ed. Willoughby Verner (London, 1986), pp. 103-4.

<sup>61</sup> Tomkinson, *Diary*, p. 168.

<sup>62</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 26 Aug. 1813, 'The Idle Companion', p. 222.

<sup>63</sup> Sylvia Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin TX, 1981), p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> Frey, *The British Soldier*, pp. 122-3; Kevin Lynch, *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society, and Tradition, 1807-15* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 137.

<sup>65</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 50.

to protect them.<sup>66</sup> Writing to his father, Keep described his frenzied protection of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot's colours when they came under French threat during the 1813 Battle of Maya: 'A violent zeal seized me to preserve the Colours, not caring for my life, and I turned immediately and pitched myself head long down the ravine, grasping most tightly the staff. Through bushes and briars I rolled, and scrambled, heavy shots after me. The exertion was such as under other circumstances would have been impossible.'<sup>67</sup>

Varying reputations reinforced regimental distinctions, providing a point of pride for officers. Tomkinson reflected in his diary that other officers took an interest in the achievements of other regiments, not out of a congratulatory spirit: 'but too often with an intention of finding some error to detract from the credit of the affair.'<sup>68</sup> Being able to maintain a sense of pride in a regiment's character and achievements, therefore, was essential to the formation of an attachment between officer and regiment. Observing the breakdown of the Hussar Brigade, including the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, during 1813, Lieutenant William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons noted to his father: 'They are very conceited and extremely jealous of our Brigade which has been working with them and is at present Twice as effective.'<sup>69</sup> In contrast, being unable to take pride in a regiment could damage the connection between an officer and their regiment. Woodberry recorded in his journal how the collective dishonour experienced by the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars fractured officers' relationships with the regiment, to the point that he and several others were considering leaving the regiment: 'now half the officers are implicated, so I was informed last night, in an unfortunate affair respecting the plunder ... The whole may not suffer, but I think it likely the whole will leave. ... The Regiment, it is plain to see is gone to the devil. God send I was out of it.'<sup>70</sup> A bad reputation could deter officers from joining a regiment: having purchased a captaincy in the 99<sup>th</sup> Foot, Kinloch expressed his reluctance to join his new regiment to his mother as the 99<sup>th</sup> was: 'in every respect by no means a desirable regiment to remain in, two officers have been tried by court martial within these twelve month.'<sup>71</sup> The regiment was the primary institution from which junior officers could extract honour, a central component of their military identities. Being situated in a regiment which did not satisfy this need could, ultimately, undermine an officer's sense of belonging in, and attachment to their regiment.

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<sup>66</sup> Frey, *The British Soldier*, p. 123.

<sup>67</sup> Lieutenant William Thornton Keep, 10 Aug. 1813, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 161.

<sup>68</sup> Tomkinson, *Diary*, p. 285.

<sup>69</sup> Lieutenant William Bragge, 1 Jul. 1813, in William Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait, 1811-1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons*, ed. S.A.C. Cassels (New York, NY, 1963), p. 106.

<sup>70</sup> NAM, 1968-07-267, Woodberry, 'The Idle Companion', pp. 179-80.

<sup>71</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 25 Mar. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 116.

### ***Regimental Identities***

Fraternal bonds and an honourable reputation were essential in binding junior officers to their regiments. There is also evidence to suggest that junior officers identified with regiments as abstract institutions with a culture and legacy that transcended the individuals who made up the regiment. All British regiments had distinguishing features: uniforms, badges, and colours, which varied markedly between regiments.<sup>72</sup> The creation of regimental cultures and identities had begun formally during the eighteenth century, as battle honours were instituted from 1762 and regiments adopted regional place names during the 1780s.<sup>73</sup> As argued by Kevin Linch, however, the practice of demobilising the army following a conflict ensured that unless a zealous colonel chose to invest in and celebrate a regiment's history, regimental cultures built up during times of war dissipated upon its conclusion.<sup>74</sup> The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars saw regimental identities become firmly embedded, as regiments developed organic identities based around distinguishing characteristics, regimental achievements and history, national characteristics, and music.<sup>75</sup> New nicknames for regiments proliferated during this period, highlighting the capacity of conflict to create and cement regimental traditions.<sup>76</sup> Nicknames were formulated after an extraordinary regimental feat, a distinguishing characteristic, or act of infamy: the 11<sup>th</sup> Foot acquired the name 'The Bloody Eleventh' after heavy casualties at the 1812 Battle of Salamanca, the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles were variously dubbed the 'Sweeps' or 'Grasshoppers' after their unique green jackets, and the 58<sup>th</sup> Foot were christened the 'Steelbacks' after a number of the regiment's men were flogged for stealing beehives in the Peninsula.<sup>77</sup> While some regiments with striking characteristics had more distinguishable identities than more generic regiments, official steps were taken to celebrate the culture and history of every regiment. During the latter stages of the Peninsular War, the Horse Guards began to collect information around which regimental identities could form. This was reflective of the evolution of the idea of the regiment from an organisational concept to a transcendent institution, a trend which was built upon and expanded during the nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup>

Cookson has argued that British regimental identities were stronger amongst rankers than officers, with eighty per cent of private soldiers serving with a single regiment, fostering a

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<sup>72</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 35.

<sup>73</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, pp. 136-7.

<sup>74</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, pp. 136-8.

<sup>75</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', pp. 35-6.

<sup>76</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 83; Bamford, *Sickness, Suffering, and the Sword*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>77</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Discovering British Regimental Traditions* (Princes Risborough, 2007), pp. 80-1.

<sup>78</sup> Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, p. 136; David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, 1870-2000* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 10-1.

strong bond between rankers and their regiment.<sup>79</sup> Pre-1815, eighty per cent of the officers in this study had spent their entire career with one regiment, barring brief exchanges into other regiments to gain promotion. With a similarly static career pattern as the rank and file, the officers in this study could be expected to exhibit fierce regimental identities. Junior officers' post-war memoirs reflect a desire to commemorate not just their own service, but their regiment's achievements of the near past, suggesting that regiments emerged from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with distinct identities. It is in memoirs where regimental nicknames were most commonly referred to: Captain John Patterson took delight in being a part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot, or 'Dirty Half-Hundred', so named because of their regimental number, and the black facings to their uniform; while Bell commemorated the 'select and high-caste officers' who were part of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot or 'Cumberland Gentlemen.'<sup>80</sup> Post-war memoirs, particularly those written from the 1830s onwards, were written at a period when celebrating regimental culture was becoming more commonplace, with the publication of regimental histories.<sup>81</sup> Officer-memoirists could be conscious of their role in forming regimental identities. Patterson wrote his 1837 memoir as a memorial to the 50<sup>th</sup> Foot: 'Among the various military narratives, written to edify the world, nothing has yet transpired regarding the old Fiftieth ... the high esteem in which I hold the companions of many a hard fought day prompts me to offer this feeble record of their services.'<sup>82</sup>

Contemporary sources also suggest that junior officers were receptive to regimental culture and identities, particularly in regiments with unique characteristics. The 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles were one of the most celebrated and recognisable regiments of the Napoleonic wars, not least for their green jackets, which was at once an attraction for prospective officers, and a source of pride for members of the 95<sup>th</sup>. Recalling his reasons for transferring from the 70<sup>th</sup> Foot to the 95<sup>th</sup>, Leach referred to seeing the 95<sup>th</sup> in training at Shorncliffe Barracks, where he: 'took a particular fancy to it, and ever afterwards wished most ardently to wear a green jacket.'<sup>83</sup> In a letter to his parents from the Peninsula, Simmons took particular delight in describing the capacity of the 95<sup>th</sup> to strike fear into the French: 'Some deserters that came from the enemy stated that the French did not like those *green fellows* at all; we made sad havoc amongst them.'<sup>84</sup> The officers of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot appear to have had a remarkable investment in their regimental culture. Nominally a 'fusilier' regiment, the 23<sup>rd</sup>'s officers took pride in the distinctive hairstyle, a small plait attached to the top of the head with a comb, which this designation allowed them to sport.

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<sup>79</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 33.

<sup>80</sup> Patterson, *The Adventures of Captain John Patterson*, p. 2; Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> Lynch, *Britain and Wellington's Army*, pp. 139-44.

<sup>82</sup> Patterson, *The Adventures of Captain John Patterson*, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 27.

<sup>84</sup> Ensign George Simmons, 30 Sep. 1810, in Simmons, *A British Rifleman*, p. 108.

Lieutenant Thomas Henry Browne recorded the revulsion that the 1808 general orders standardising army hairstyles caused: 'the order was obeyed in sulky silence by the Officers, and particularly by those, who had been distinguished, by a luxuriant plait.'<sup>85</sup> Having agreed to ceremonially remove each other's plaits with a carving knife in the mess, some officers then decided to burn their plaits, others preferring to retain them as mementos.<sup>86</sup>

As highlighted by Cookson, regiments with a distinct national character fostered the strongest regimental identities.<sup>87</sup> The most celebrated and distinctive national regiments were the Highland regiments; however, other regiments were also distinguished by their national character. Browne, an English officer of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot, or Welsh Fusiliers, described the ceremony performed by the regiment's officers on Saint David's Day, where a drummer-boy rode a goat around the mess room, selling leeks to the officers, who were then required to eat the leek in its entirety.<sup>88</sup> The size of the leek was proportional to how much service an officer had seen with the regiment: experienced officers received small leeks, while new officers: 'have presented to them the largest Leek that can be procured, and unless sickness prevent it, no respite is given, until the last tip of the its green leaf is inclosed in the unwilling mouth; and day after day passes before the smell and taste is fairly got rid of.'<sup>89</sup> Crowe, then a new English officer serving with a distinctively Irish regiment, the 27<sup>th</sup>, or 'Inniskilling' foot regiment, faced an initiation ceremony on Saint Patrick's Day where he was 'christened an Irishman.'<sup>90</sup> Crowe recorded the ceremony, performed by the regimental surgeon, in his diary: 'He immersed a large shamrock with its roots and the earth attached, in a plated goblet containing more than the third of a bottle of wine, and ordered me to kneel. He then dipped his finger in the wine, made a cross on my forehead, and profanely naming the Trinity, christened me.'<sup>91</sup>

For Browne and Crowe, the expressions of Welsh or Irish national identity within their regiments contributed to their regimental attachment. Despite being English officers in non-English regiments, the national cultures of their regiments provided a point of differentiation from other regiments, and a tangible regimental culture to affix their affections to. The somewhat off-putting regimental ceremonies they partook in were seen as key steps of initiation. Despite being chastened by the blasphemous overtones of his 'christening', Crowe still recognised it as an 'ordeal' he had to pass before becoming 'established' as a member of the

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<sup>85</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>86</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, pp. 114-5.

<sup>87</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 37.

<sup>88</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 73.

<sup>90</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 57.



27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, Browne saw the leek ceremony as pivotal to breaking in new officers, noting the ceremony: 'may be a nasty way of making a Welsh Fusilier – and so it is.'<sup>93</sup> There is little to suggest that junior officers shared in the same regimental culture as the rank and file, indeed officers' appropriation of regimental customs appears to have served to reinforce the distinction between officers and rankers. The initiation rituals described by Browne and Crowe took place within the closed society of the officers' mess, while Browne stressed that hair worn by the 23<sup>rd</sup>'s officers was different to that of rankers.

There were, however, limits to junior officers' regimental identities. While certainly still present, junior officers' regimental identities during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were more fluid than the image presented in post-war memoirs. Regimental cultures were celebrated by officers; however, fraternal bonds and honour could be reconstructed as officers moved between regiments. Having transferred from the 77<sup>th</sup> Foot to the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot, Keep wrote to his brother: 'I fear I would make a poor soldier, were it not for the companionship in peril of those I am attached to ... I should be fixed in any Regiment, as soon as my affections are fixed in it.'<sup>94</sup> Initially experiencing difficulty in ingratiating himself with his new comrades in the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot owing to his reputation as a problematic member of his previous regiment, Crowe worked hard to retrieve his character with his new comrades and, after passing through his regimental initiation, stated in his diary: 'After all these trials I considered myself fully established.'<sup>95</sup> The expectation that officers would be invested in their regiment's honour ensured that rudimentary bonds could be formed with almost any regiment. As highlighted by Kennedy, British officers had an overriding concern for personal reputation, which diluted their investment in national or regimental honour.<sup>96</sup> That an officer would ensure that a regiment maintained its honour, therefore, was as much about individual as regimental honour. Captain Jonathan Leach, an officer who readily transferred from the unfashionable 70<sup>th</sup> Foot to the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles early in his career, stressed his commitment to the 70<sup>th</sup>'s honour if nothing else: 'No man is worthy to wear the uniform of his corps, be that corps what it may, who is not as tenacious of its good name as of his own individual character, and as ready to stand forward in its defence.'<sup>97</sup>

Junior officers' attachment to their regiment was tempered by the limitations of the regimental framework for conveying status upon junior officers. Should a regiment not face combat, junior officers faced little prospect of attaining recognition. Lieutenant George James Sullivan of the 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, pp. 57-8.

<sup>93</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 73.

<sup>94</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 24 Dec. 1811, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 74.

<sup>95</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 58.

<sup>96</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', pp. 133-6.

<sup>97</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), pp. 6-7.

Life Guards had his expectations of glory dashed, as his regiment never faced the French during his time in the Peninsula: 'Every individual seemed inspired to pluck a laurel for his rising country, but in this hope the Brigade were disappointed, as they never had the good fortune to be sent into action during the Peninsular War.'<sup>98</sup> Junior officers in the Peninsula could also be critical of Wellington's dispatches, which they felt understated their achievements. Lieutenant John Mills of the Coldstream Guards wrote to his sister to criticise Wellington's dispatch from the Battle of Salamanca: 'We are much disappointed at Lord Wellington's dispatch, he has made as little of it as possible and a story well told is you know half the battle. His Lordship may fight but hang me if he can write.'<sup>99</sup> As noted in Chapter Three, junior officers' relatively low rank could result in a sense of obscurity, as they saw praise as primarily bestowed on regimental commanders. As they were reliant on promotion to achieve recognition, junior officers' had a preoccupation with personal advancement that saw some junior officers prioritise their promotion over their regimental identities. Garrisoned at Halifax in North America during 1808, Browne thought this sedentary service curtailed his prospects of promotion:

My time was passing thus happily, and yet I could but palpably perceive, that I was making no progress in my profession, there was no promotion whatever in the Regiment ... I had a pining for that sort of service, which would bring advancement with it ... and I seriously thought of exchanging into some other Regiment.<sup>100</sup>

Despite staying with his regiment for a time, Browne would later seek a staff appointment outside his regiment, citing the increased opportunities for: 'observation and promotion, Officers of the Staff had over those who remained with their Regiments.'<sup>101</sup>

The potential for promotion drew officers into less glamorous services. Having accepted a captaincy with the Portuguese army in 1809, Lieutenant James Girdlestone of the 31<sup>st</sup> Foot stressed the material advantages of this appointment to his friends:

I am now going to give you some news which I am sure will astonish you all: I expect I shall be but a few days longer in the 31<sup>st</sup> Regt ... To remain in the Regiment I could not expect a Compy. in less than four years according to the general

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<sup>98</sup> British Library, London (hereafter, BL) RP 8211, George James Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Life Guards', p.4.

<sup>99</sup> Lieutenant John Mills, 14 Sep. 1812, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-14*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), p. 223.

<sup>100</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 84.

<sup>101</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 124.

promotion in the Army, and this gives me the rank of Captain in our service immediately.<sup>102</sup>

Being promoted outside a regiment does not necessarily indicate a lack of affinity with the soon to be departed regiment, as officers lamented leaving their comrades. Girdlestone elaborated: 'If I get this, I of course leave the 31<sup>st</sup> Regt. which I assure you I do with regret, but must not mind that, the only way in the Army is to get on when you can, an opportunity once lost may never occur again.'<sup>103</sup> Promoted into the Inniskillings from the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot, Crowe similarly lamented the loss of friends, toasting his fellow officers in the 48<sup>th</sup>'s mess as: 'some kind friends with whom I could live and die.'<sup>104</sup> Further, instead of receiving condemnation from their soon to be former comrades for leaving the regiment, Girdlestone and Crowe instead received congratulations, hinting at a wider acceptance of the prioritisation of promotion over the collective identity of the regiment. Regimental identities amongst junior officers were, therefore, malleable. Based on the values of comradeship and honour, which could be reconstituted between regiments, regimental identities could be reconstructed as officers moved between regiments in the pursuit of their ultimate aim, promotion.

### ***Family Ties***

Given that soldiers were largely separated from their families, it is possible that regimental bonds could supplant family identities, particularly with regards to the emotional support offered by comrades acting as a substitute for the emotional support provided by family members. Junior officers, however, retained a strong sense of themselves beyond their regiments and continued to exercise their relationships with their families. Kennedy stressed the multiplicity of the junior officer's character, whose individualism and status as an 'officer and a gentleman' helped maintain civilian identities.<sup>105</sup> Despite their integration into the 'regimental 'family'', junior officers were adept at maintaining links with their families in Britain. Military service entailed separation from families and friends for the majority of officers; however, junior officers and their families used frequent correspondence to exercise their roles as family members and involve each other in family life. In his classic account of English early-modern family life, Lawrence Stone argued that the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the development of the 'nuclear family', which was characterised by close bonds between

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<sup>102</sup> NAM 2012-06-6 Lieutenant James Girdlestone, 3 Apr. 1809.

<sup>103</sup> NAM 2012-06-6 Lieutenant James Girdlestone, 3 Apr. 1809.

<sup>104</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 47.

<sup>105</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 67.

near family members.<sup>106</sup> Stone's argument has been revised by Naomi Tadmor, who highlighted how Georgian conceptions of the 'family' remained broad; however, the warm family bonds Stone identified were a feature of polite Georgian family life.<sup>107</sup> It was this family life that junior officers aimed to keep alive through letters. Throughout their military service, junior officers turned to their family members for support and comfort through letters, a practice which highlights some of the tensions in family identities that military service entailed, but also how potential fissures were resolved. This section explores this juncture in junior officers' identities through letters sent between junior officers and their families, and highlights how the reciprocal practice of writing helped officers and their families maintain close bonds.

For the majority of junior officers, military service necessitated separation from their families: parents, siblings, wives, and friends were left behind as officers entered into barracks or joined their regiments on overseas service. For the upper and middle classes from which the majority of junior officers were drawn, family life was shaped by the cultures of politeness and sensibility, which stressed closer familial bonds, but maintained patriarchal authority of the household.<sup>108</sup> With an average age of eighteen years at the time of their first commission, for the majority of officers in this study, joining a regiment or departing for service abroad entailed leaving the family home. This juncture was already recognised in landed and elite families as a critical stage in developing an adult identity, which was negotiated by parents through advice in letters.<sup>109</sup> The removal from family could be jarring. As a new ensign with the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot, Peter Bowlby was unceremoniously abandoned by his father after two days with his new comrades, arriving at the local inn to find his: 'father had left early without having given me any notice of his intention.'<sup>110</sup> A more common experience was a sense of angst at losing the moral support of the family, particularly that of mothers. Departing for the Peninsula in 1812, Bridgeman wrote to his mother: 'Adieu, best of mothers, I live in hope that we shall meet before we sail as much as I do wish to see service, I cannot look forward to the thoughts of parting from all I love without grief.'<sup>111</sup> Although a less frequent experience for junior officers, becoming separated from wives produced similar sentiments. Entering into barracks in Ireland, Second Captain William

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<sup>106</sup> Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England*, pp. 221-2

<sup>107</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 8-9. For an overview of the historical debates over eighteenth-century British family life, see Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 209-32.

<sup>108</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. 101-3; Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 219-23; Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England*, pp. 221-2.

<sup>109</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, "'Upon Your Entry into the World": Masculine Values and the Threshold of Adulthood among Landed Elites in England, 1680-1800', *Social History*, 33 (2008), p. 406; Michèle Cohen, 'The Grand Tour: Constructing the English Gentleman in Eighteenth-Century France', *History of Education*, 21 (1992), pp. 242-4; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven, CT, 1995), pp. 315-7.

<sup>110</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Bowlby', p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 11 Apr. 1812, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 12.

Granville Eliot of the Royal Artillery lamented their separation in a letter to his wife in England: 'with ... pleasure I shall look back on those few short hours we spent in each other's arms & shall look forward, with anxiety & pleasure, to the renewal of them.'<sup>112</sup> The language used by officers to describe their emotions at being separated from family was styled to remind of the bonds that remained between individuals, despite separation. By employing emotive language and focusing on their 'grief', 'anxiety', and 'pleasure', officers were able to describe this experience in terms which reminded the recipient of the officer's devotion and affection.<sup>113</sup>

Entering the military was recognised as a potential source of estrangement from family life. Lieutenant John Harrison of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot noted to his mother that fear of dishonour forced a comrade to reconsider visiting his family on leave: 'He would have wished to have gone home in consequence of the death of his brother, but does not deem it consistent with his honour. You see when a man goes for a soldier, he sacrifices many things.'<sup>114</sup> By refusing to countenance leaving his regiment bound for the West Indies, a region renowned for its high death rate from disease, Lieutenant Edward Teasdale of the 54<sup>th</sup> Foot appears to have brought himself into conflict with his brother. Teasdale expressed his concern to his mother:

Now that I am talking of respecting one's relatives, it puts me in mind of a notion I sometimes have, that my Brother ... is not exactly pleased with the way I am going on. However as my own judgement does not condemn me, it cannot be helped ... I am really desirous of being in the good graces of my relations, though I may not always have gone the right way to work.<sup>115</sup>

Letters sent between junior officers and their families were simultaneously the means by which junior officers maintained family relationships and a sign of the difficulties inherent in those relationships. Letter writing was already an established means of maintaining bonds of kinship, however, the importance of letters was amplified for officers on overseas service.<sup>116</sup> As suggested by Kennedy, officers' style of correspondence formed a 'bridge of identity'.<sup>117</sup> Sending and receiving letters contributed to the maintenance of civilian identities in other ways. Receiving a letter confirmed the presence of the recipient in the thoughts of the sender; assured the well-being of the sender; and allowed officers to participate in family life from afar. In his study of the role families played in the 'emotional survival' of British soldiers during the First World War, Michael Roper emphasised the reciprocal act of sending and receiving letters as a

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<sup>112</sup> NAM 1959-03-127, Second Captain William Granville Eliot, 25 Nov. 1805.

<sup>113</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>114</sup> NAM 1980-08-56, Lieutenant John Harrison, 8 Feb. 1811.

<sup>115</sup> NAM 2011-08-34, Lieutenant Edward Teasdale, 1 Jan. 1807.

<sup>116</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>117</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 70.

tangible demonstration of the relationship between combatants and civilians, and highlighted the 'evocative' and 'vivid' sign of affection which letters conveyed.<sup>118</sup> In this respect, junior officers were energetic in their attempts to maintain bonds with their families: officers corresponded with a wide range of family, friends, and patrons. Officers established regular patterns of writing: while in the Peninsula, Lieutenant George Harvey Percival of the Coldstream Guards had an arrangement with his aunt whereby they would 'write once a week if it was only one line.'<sup>119</sup> The routine of letter writing can make communication appear as a duty officers felt they had to discharge; however, the intermittency of contact via letters ensured that each letter was an important symbol of the well-being of, and ongoing relationship between, families.

Letters from home were received as a sign of the ongoing bonds between soldier and civilian, and brought relief to officers undergoing hardship. Jennine Hurl-Eamon has revealed the 'emotional succour' which letters between soldiers and their wives provided during the eighteenth-century.<sup>120</sup> Junior officers' letters suggest that this was true of other family relationships. On the march in the Peninsula, First Lieutenant Rice Jones of the Royal Engineers described letters from his father as: 'the only comfort I can enjoy in this country.'<sup>121</sup> During the interminable 1810 to 1812 Siege of Cadiz, Bridgeman begged his mother to write every fortnight, stating: 'if you knew the real, the *very, very* great pleasure I have in hearing from any of you, you would not, I'm sure, grudge the time it takes you to write. Now you well know the pleasure there is in receiving a letter in England, but here the pleasure is double, treble, in short the greatest pleasure I have.'<sup>122</sup> In contrast, not receiving letters was considered a disappointment. Captain William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons wryly noted to his father: 'I have only received two shabby Postscripts from Lucy. I have not heard from Jack this Twelvemonth and I am not certain that either Charlotte or Champ can write, never having seen a Letter from either.'<sup>123</sup> Not receiving a letter could be perceived as a sign of indifference. Serving in Jamaica, Teasdale rebuked his mother:

This letter is the fourth I have written to you without having received any from you in return. It is almost impossible they can have not arrived; and if yours had only been directed to Jamaica I should undoubtedly have received them ... I am

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<sup>118</sup> Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 49-50.

<sup>119</sup> NAM 1982-02-8, Lieutenant George Harvey Percival, 27 Oct. 1812.

<sup>120</sup> Jennine Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 164-8.

<sup>121</sup> First Lieutenant Rice Jones, 11 Nov. 1809, in Rice Jones, *An Engineer Officer Under Wellington in the Peninsula*, ed. H.V. Shore (Cambridge, 1986), p. 46.

<sup>122</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 24 Jul. 1812, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 42.

<sup>123</sup> Captain William Bragge, 1 Jan. 1812, in Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait*, p. 25.

extremely anxious to hear from my family, it is almost eighteen months since I have had a letter from you.<sup>124</sup>

Officers' letters also suggest that their family expected letters regularly. In a letter to his father from the Peninsula, Aitchison outlined his 'sincere regret at receiving so very few letters from home. You have experienced disappointment at not receiving a letter from me – *judge my feelings by your own*.'<sup>125</sup>

Letters were physical evidence of the sender's well-being, and a sign of interest in the person enquired after. Having not received a letter from his father for several months, First Lieutenant Rice Jones of the Royal Engineers feared for his father's welfare: 'I assure you I begin to feel quite uneasy, fearing that something or other has happened to prevent you writing.'<sup>126</sup> Late in writing home for Christmas in 1811, Ensign William Thornton Keep of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot hoped that he had not caused anxiety in his family, writing to his mother: 'ere you partook of your Christmas Dinner ... news of my good health, I know, would have gone some way to increase your felicity.'<sup>127</sup> The dangers of sickness, wounding, and death all encouraged officers to write home with news of their safety more frequently. In the wake of battle, officers were quick to fire off a letter reporting their survival. Following the 1813 Battle of Vitoria, Keep wrote to his mother: 'I have only a few minutes to write a few lines to you, to assure you of my safety, after our engagement of yesterday ... I am now amongst my companions who have been lucky to escape uninjured, with a pannier for my writing desk, whilst they too are busy in gratifying their friends at home.'<sup>128</sup> Should an officer be wounded, they were especially keen to assuage any fears their family had, especially as lists of wounded were published before the officer could write home. Wounded during the 1812 storming of Badajoz, Lieutenant Charles Kinloch of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot downplayed his wound to his mother: 'this is the first opportunity I have had of writing & as you will *most likely behold* my name is amongst the list of wounded, it is just as well I should tell you what sort of clink it is.'<sup>129</sup>

Letters allowed officers and their family members to exercise their relationships as relatives, siblings, sons, and parents. Officers' letters frequently highlighted the civil elements of their character as a means of maintaining relationships with family members and to insulate themselves from concerns over their barbarisation.<sup>130</sup> Cocks stressed the scarcity of battle and

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<sup>124</sup> NAM 2011-08-34, Lieutenant Edward Teasdale, 5 Jul. 1808.

<sup>125</sup> Ensign John Aitchison, 14 Sep. 1809, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 57.

<sup>126</sup> First Lieutenant Rice Jones, 11 Nov. 1809, in Jones, *An Engineer Officer Under Wellington*, p. 46.

<sup>127</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 24 Dec. 1811, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 74.

<sup>128</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 22 Jun. 1813, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 148.

<sup>129</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 10 Apr. 1812, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 96.

<sup>130</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 72-80.

the filial bonds of comradeship as evidence of the army's humanity in a letter to his uncle: 'Few regard soldiers in their true light ... Men unused to war and ignorant of its ways regard soldiers as pernicious characters because they always figure them as intent on the destruction of their enemy, but a soldier only meets his foe now and then and he is every day engaged in reciprocal offices of kindness with his comrades.'<sup>131</sup> This trend is particularly evident with regards to officers of landed or aristocratic backgrounds, whose letters are replete with references to their gentlemanly and sporting exploits. Cocks wrote to his sister from winter quarters in Portugal: 'I have been often accustomed to write to you, my dear Margaret, on those books I happen to have lately read.'<sup>132</sup> Having obtained leave to visit Greece while serving in Italy, First Lieutenant Charles Dansey of the Royal Artillery wrote a lengthy description of his trip to his uncle, who had a particular interest in travel: 'having accomplished that much of my tour, I choose this period to give you an account of part of it ... I may flatter myself that it will be of interest to you.'<sup>133</sup> Emphasising their humanity, leisure time and polite accomplishments instead of military matters allowed officers to render their experiences familiar to a civilian audience, while maintaining a shared culture which reminded civilians and soldiers of the common ground they shared.

For married officers, military service could be expected to place a strain on their marriage. As highlighted in Chapter Two, the British officer corps could be disdainful of marriage, with attitudes towards women shaped by the character of the rake as much as by notions of polite gentility. As noted by Jennine Hurl-Eamon, however, the rakish character of the Georgian army was tempered by overlaps with another figure of Georgian masculinity: the domestic householder.<sup>134</sup> Georgian husbands were expected to strive towards domestic harmony based on the principles of benevolence and compassion, and to ensure that husbands and wives were what Amanda Vickery described as 'equal souls' in their marriage.<sup>135</sup> Eliot was separated from his wife and newborn daughter when he travelled first to barracks, then on to the Peninsula in 1808, a separation that caused a degree of angst. Yet, through the medium of letters, Eliot still sought to exercise his role as household provider, and a caring husband and father.<sup>136</sup> Living on his rations to save money, Eliot regularly sent bills for money home, and also sought to remain emotionally engaged with his family. Just after his daughter's birthday, Eliot wrote to his wife: 'I

<sup>131</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 156.

<sup>132</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 31 Nov. 1810, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 91.

<sup>133</sup> First Lieutenant Charles Dansey, 21 Mar. 1811, in Charles Dansey, *The Letters of 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain Charles Dansey, Royal Artillery, 1806-1813*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2006), p. 16.

<sup>134</sup> Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, pp. 216-8.

<sup>135</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 9; Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, p. 248.

<sup>136</sup> Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 219-21; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 9.



kept my dear little darling's birthday on the 9<sup>th</sup> and could not get her out of my head for a moment the whole day. Kiss her for me, every night & morning.'<sup>137</sup>

The most important relationship which officers, particularly young officers, worked to maintain was with their parents, who were among officers' most regular correspondents. Officers were constant in their desire to appear as dutiful and loyal sons, and saw regular letter writing as a demonstration of those qualities. In barracks in Britain, Kinloch wrote to his mother out of a sense of necessity: 'I really have not a word to say for myself and merely write as you express a wish to hear from me.'<sup>138</sup> As revealed by Henry French and Mark Rothery, parents from gentry and aristocratic backgrounds were accustomed to using letters as a tool of parenting from afar, as they encouraged their sons to adopt standards consistent with their expectations of gentlemanly conduct.<sup>139</sup> Junior officers received similar advice. Martha Freer, the mother of three Napoleonic-era officers, wrote to her son Edward, who had just been commissioned into the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot, and advised him to always moderate his behaviour:

I hope my dear boy that you will be prudent and careful for I can assure you that it is entirely out of our power to help and assist in any degree – do avoid that part of the regiment which is gay and giddy – always remember that by a strict and steady conduct you will gain the respect of your superior officers.<sup>140</sup>

Officers were certainly aware of the need to keep their behaviour in line with family expectations and honour, and sought parental approval. Captain William Warre of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot wrote to his father that his: 'happiness so much depends upon your approval of my conduct.'<sup>141</sup> Girdlestone hoped that his decision to transfer to the Portuguese service was in line with his parents' expectations: 'What I have done has been with the advice of our Colonel and the rest of my friends in the Regt., and I hope my father and mother will approve of it.'<sup>142</sup>

Although officers looked forward to receiving letters from both parents, there is some suggestion that certain officers sought different responses from mothers and fathers. Mothers were generally written to as a primary point of contact, and as an intermediary with other relatives. Teasdale implored his mother to keep him abreast of all family developments: 'And when you write, have the goodness to tell me a little more of the family; my poor cousins may be

<sup>137</sup> NAM 1959-03-127, Second Captain William Granville Eliot, 15 Feb. 1809.

<sup>138</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 2 Jun. 1813, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 120.

<sup>139</sup> French and Rothery, "'Upon Your Entry into the World'", p. 413.

<sup>140</sup> Martha Freer, unknown date in 1809, in 'Letters from the Peninsula: The Freer Family Correspondence, 1807-1814', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, ed. Norman Scarfe 29 (1953), p. 47.

<sup>141</sup> Captain William Warre, 27 Apr. 1809, in William Warre, *Letters from the Peninsula, 1808-1812*, ed. Edmond Warre (Memphis, TN, 2012 [1909]), p. 19.

<sup>142</sup> NAM 2012-06-6, Lieutenant James Girdlestone, 3 Apr. 1809.

dead for all I know ... if ever I return to Darlington, and do not know some of my relatives; for you never put me in mind of them.'<sup>143</sup> Ideals of polite Georgian motherhood stressed the importance of mothers acting as carers, and were associated with the values of compassion, tenderness, and devotion.<sup>144</sup> The tone and content of letters to mothers reflect this expectation, as officers looked to their mothers for emotional support during periods of distress, which was also a feature of British soldiers' letters during the First World War.<sup>145</sup> Having received a poor prognosis of his full recovery from a wound to his neck, Keep hesitantly wrote to his mother:

I am not so well inclined as I have been, to take up the pen to address you – feeling unwilling to impart to you anything to disturb the pleasing expectations my previous letters may have inspired. Do not however suppose it is about myself only, that I am possessed with this feeling for it refers equally to melancholy scenes which I have lately been witnessing, and the illness and death of the poor woman, not only in the same house but *room* where Waring and I have been billeted.<sup>146</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that mothers extended emotional support through their letters. Following his wounding during the storming of San Sebastian, Ensign Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards received a compassionate letter from his mother which gave Bridgeman: 'more delightful misery than I ever felt before.'<sup>147</sup> Bridgeman followed up in a later letter,

I had not time to answer the kindest letter that ever was written by a mother to a child ... I assure it completely unmanned me ... I cannot allude to any particular sentence in your letter, they all express too much for anything I could say to answer them, but I am sure it is worth receiving twenty wounds to receive one such letter.<sup>148</sup>

Despite some shared characteristics, such as descriptions of landscapes and current events, letters sent to fathers tended to be less emotive than letters sent to mothers, and included more discussions of an officer's conduct and expenditure, a trend which likely reflects the idealised role of fathers who used their role as material providers and disciplinarians to guide their sons from adolescence to adulthood.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> NAM 2011-08-34, Lieutenant Edward Teasdale, 1 Jan. 1807.

<sup>144</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT, 1998), pp. 123-4; Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 219-26.

<sup>145</sup> Roper, *The Secret Battle*, pp. 58-63.

<sup>146</sup> Lieutenant William Thornton Keep, 27 Feb. 1814, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 201.

<sup>147</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 9 Oct. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman*, p. 153.

<sup>148</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 6 Oct. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman*, p. 155.

<sup>149</sup> Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting', pp. 219-26; Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, pp. 99-100.

These details are almost exclusive to letters sent between fathers and sons, and are especially prominent in the letters from wealthy, landed, or aristocratic families, who were more likely to be paying an allowance to their sons. As calculated by Burnham and McGuigan, a Guards officer could expect to spend five pence more than he earned daily on basic expenses, let alone any additional costs.<sup>150</sup> Despite being paid more than officers of the line, therefore, Guards officers could not maintain such lifestyles without additional income. Henry French and Mark Rothery have revealed how eighteenth-century English elites attempted to instil desirable qualities in their sons through the medium of letter writing once their sons had left home.<sup>151</sup> Officers in the ostentatious Guards' regiments were conscious of how their expenditure could appear as profligate, and often iterated their attempts at economy. Drawing an additional £200 pounds against his father, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bradford, to cover these expenses, Bridgeman justified this by arguing his economy: 'believe me there is not an officer of the Guards who starts with a smaller stock than myself ... if you reckon everything I said ... you will not think me very expensive.'<sup>152</sup> Bridgeman also appealed to his father's sense of family reputation by reminding his father: 'you said that you always wished me to go on as my fellow officers.'<sup>153</sup> Ensign John Lucie Blackman of the Coldstream Guards and the son of a director of the Bank of England, found himself in constant defence of his expenditure. Following his purchase of campaign equipment, Blackman received a rebuke from his father: 'I think you spend too much money ... I have paid Mr Reynolds' agent here £80 odd pound for a variety of articles, furnished you from Lisbon ... I think the pony and forage totally unnecessary expense.'<sup>154</sup> Fearful of placing a strain on his relationship with his father, Blackman enlisted the Coldstream's assistant surgeon and family friend, Maynard, to reassure Blackman's father that his expenditure was necessary and 'not viciously incurred, either by gambling, or on any other purpose than those to which his ill luck and want of sufficient food have forced him.'<sup>155</sup> Letters, therefore, not only allowed officers and family members to a general connection with their family, but nourished specific bonds between officers and their family. The exercising of the roles of sons, siblings, mothers, and fathers through letters reinforced the importance of these relationships to officers, ensuring that officers remained invested in their civilian identities.

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<sup>150</sup> Robert Burnham and Ron McGuigan, *The British Army Against Napoleon: Facts, Lists, and Trivia, 1805-1815* (Barnsley, 2010), pp. 147-50.

<sup>151</sup> French and Rothery, "'Upon your Entry into the World'", pp. 413-7.

<sup>152</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 23 Jan. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 73.

<sup>153</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 23 Jan. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 72.

<sup>154</sup> George Blackman, 10 Feb. 1813, in Blackman, *'It all Culminated at Hougoumont'*, pp. 51-2.

<sup>155</sup> Assistant Surgeon Thomas Maynard, 3 May 1813, in Blackman, *'It All Culminated at Hougoumont'*, p. 56.

### ***Families in the Field***

Given the pangs of separation that could accompany military service, it is unsurprising to find junior officers fantasising about having their families alongside them. Keep regularly wrote to his younger brother, Samuel, recounting his regimental experiences. Consistent in these letters was Keep's belief that Samuel would enjoy military life. In August 1812, Keep wrote: 'I wish my dear Sam I could describe so clearly all I witness that you might suppose yourself here among us. It is probable you would then feel inclined to enlist with us and become an aspirant after military fame.'<sup>156</sup> Still only twenty-one years old in 1812, Keep was in an unlikely position to be able to bring his brother into the army with him. Other, older officers had more material discussions with their families about joining them on campaign. Eliot wrote from Portugal to his wife in September 1808: 'Were we sure of remaining the winter here I should wish above all things to have you come out but a winter's passage with the uncertainty of remaining in the country I think are much against it. Consult with your friends & if they think it advisable, come if you can.'<sup>157</sup> For a handful of officers in this study, having their wives, children, and siblings with them in the army was not a fantasy, but a reality. Soldiering could be a family affair: sons of officers were an important social category of new officers, brothers served alongside each other, while each regiment had a contingent of 'army wives', who wedded soldiers and officers before or during campaign, and followed the regiment thereafter.<sup>158</sup> That military service could be undertaken alongside family members not only highlights how officers maintained a sense of their civilian selves, but also how military and family lives could intertwine.

Military service did not necessarily mean physical separation from one's spouse, or abandoning the role of householder and provider. Hurl-Eamon has argued that marriage was a crucial step in eighteenth-century soldiers' progression from youth to manhood.<sup>159</sup> This was certainly the case for Harry Smith, who married a Spanish girl while a twenty-four year-old captain with the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles in the Peninsula. Smith saw his marriage as requiring him to develop patriarchal attributes. A self-confessed 'wild youth' before his marriage, Smith saw his newfound responsibility as requiring a greater attention to duty, so that he might provide for his wife: 'love would incite me to exertions in the hopes of preferment, the only mode I had to look to for

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<sup>156</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 7 Aug. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 81.

<sup>157</sup> NAM 1959-03-127, Second Captain William Granville Eliot, 23 Sep. 1808.

<sup>158</sup> For women and the British army, see Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*, Ch. 4; Annabel Venning, *Following the Drum: The Lives of Army Wives and Daughters, Past and Present* (London, 2005); Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 192-6.

<sup>159</sup> Jennine Hurl-Eamon, 'Youth in the Devil's Service, Manhood in the King's: Reaching Adulthood in the Eighteenth-Century British Army', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 8 (2015), pp. 179-82.

a comfortable maintenance.<sup>160</sup> Other officers married as an antidote to military unhappiness. Lieutenant George Bourne of the 85<sup>th</sup> Foot was one such officer. During Bourne's service, the 85<sup>th</sup> was in a perpetual state of turmoil, and was racked by internal disputes and officers being brought to court-martial.<sup>161</sup> The 85<sup>th</sup> fell apart, to the point that in 1813, all of the 85<sup>th</sup>'s officers were sent to other regiments, and its colonel forced to resign.<sup>162</sup> Against this backdrop, Bourne married in 1810 in the hope of providing some domestic stability away from the 'delightful' confines of his barracks, where he was exposed to: 'the *envied* and *much enjoyed* society of our *beloved lieutenant colonel*.'<sup>163</sup> Eventually retiring from the regular army in 1813, Bourne aimed: 'to quit I hope for ever the unsettled turmoil of either a military or genteel life for a quiet country occupation.'<sup>164</sup>

Married officers made attempts to have a fulfilling domestic life with their families. Bourne, for example, arranged to be placed on recruiting service in Britain and was always accompanied by his wife, with the two having a daughter in March 1812.<sup>165</sup> As he managed to remain in Britain, Bourne may have had an easier time in keeping his family together than officers on overseas service. Yet there is evidence of fulfilling family lives taking place on campaign. Captain Peter Jennings of the 40<sup>th</sup> Foot was accompanied by his wife and children on the 1806 South American expedition, where his new-born daughter was baptised in a Catholic monastery.<sup>166</sup> After their marriage in the Peninsula, Smith's wife followed him for the rest of the war, and throughout his lengthy career. Smith's memoir suggests little tension between the demands of the service and his marriage: 'My duty was my duty – I gloried in it; my wife even still more so, and never did she ... complain if I was away.'<sup>167</sup> Furthermore, being in close proximity allowed Smith and his wife to provide the support other officers were forced to seek through letters. Smith stated: 'we were happy – oh, how happy, often amidst scenes of distress and privation that would have appalled stouter hearts, not devoted like ours!'<sup>168</sup>

Due to the scarcity of accounts left by junior officers who maintained wives and children on campaign, there is a lack of detail surrounding the daily life of these families. The experiences of brothers who served in the army together, however, highlights how family life could continue in

<sup>160</sup> Harry Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on the Sutlej*, ed. G.C. Moore Smith (London, 1901), pp. 72-4.

<sup>161</sup> For the courts martial of the 85<sup>th</sup>'s officers, see Charles James, *A Collection of the Charges, Opinions and Sentences of General Courts Martial* (London, 1820), pp. 475-6.

<sup>162</sup> Bamford, *Sickness, Suffering, and the Sword*, pp. 62, 153.

<sup>163</sup> George Bourne, *My Military Career by Lieutenant George Bourne, 85<sup>th</sup> Foot, 1804-18*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2006), p. 66.

<sup>164</sup> Bourne, *My Military Career*, p. 78.

<sup>165</sup> Bourne, *My Military Career*, p. 77.

<sup>166</sup> NAM 1983-01-102 Peter R. Jennings, 'Diary of Peter R. Jennings'.

<sup>167</sup> Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith*, p. 74.

<sup>168</sup> Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith*, p. 74.

a military setting. It was not unusual for officers to have brothers serving in the army, or even in the same regiment. The Freer and Simmons families, for example, both had three sons in the army during the Napoleonic Wars. In the Freer family, John, the eldest, served with the Royal Artillery, while William and Edward, the second and third eldest, were both subalterns in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot. The Simmons brothers were George, the eldest, who served with the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles, Maud, a lieutenant with the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot, and Joseph, who joined George in the 95<sup>th</sup> during 1812. Sibling interactions in Georgian Britain were weighted towards eldest sons, with a growing social expectation of warm sibling relationships. Vickery highlighted how the law of primogeniture placed eldest sons in a position of authority, as they inherited patriarchal authority.<sup>169</sup> Amy Harris also suggested that elder sons held sway due to primogeniture, but also observed that the eighteenth century saw increasingly close fraternal bonds, and a social emphasis on equality between siblings.<sup>170</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have also highlighted the increasing closeness of bonds between siblings during the late-eighteenth century.<sup>171</sup> The experiences of brothers in the army suggest similarly close bonds existed between brothers on military service. Brothers on campaign sent letters to each other; however, there was also the potential for physical meetings as a way of maintaining bonds. Cocks found ample time in the Peninsula to visit his brother, a captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoon Guards. Cocks wrote to their cousin describing the brothers' adventures: 'We live pretty well – lots of pretty girls, espanolitas, and we pass our time here very fairly.'<sup>172</sup> Second Captain Charles Dansey dined with his brother, a captain in the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot, whenever possible in the Peninsula, and wrote to his mother: 'In one of our first day's marches we passed near Hen's cantonments & I broke off to go & breakfast with him, roused him out of bed and made him parade an extra ½ dozen of eggs, he rode on with me and having his revenge for his breakfast out of our dinner.'<sup>173</sup> The lengths brothers went to in visiting each other could be considerable. George Simmons wrote to his parents of his meeting with Maud: 'I saw my brother some days back ... I walked over a mountainous country above twenty miles to shake hands with him once again.'<sup>174</sup> That officers could seemingly detach themselves from their regiments to visit nearby brothers suggests that there was little tension between the demands of duty and the desire to maintain bonds with brothers.

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<sup>169</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>170</sup> Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 55-74; Amy Harris, 'That Fierce Edge: Sibling Conflict and Politics in Georgian England', *Journal of Family History*, 37 (2012), pp. 157-9.

<sup>171</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987), pp. 348-53.

<sup>172</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 12 Jul. 1811, in Cocks, *An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p. 128.

<sup>173</sup> Second Captain Charles Dansey, 30 May 1813, in Dansey, *The Letters of 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain Charles Dansey*, p. 67.

<sup>174</sup> Ensign George Simmons, Sep. 1809, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 33.

Physical contact allowed brothers to provide material and emotional support to one another, and to recreate communal family life. That junior officers travelled beyond their regiment to provide and seek support may suggest that support offered from a family member held more weight than support from regimental comrades. William Freer wrote to his elder brother John, thanking him for visiting his younger brothers as they recovered from wounds sustained during the 1812 Siege of Badajoz: 'Your affection in coming to Lisbon when we were wounded will never be erased from my heart. Oh! What pleasure it would give me to see you in France ... I long much to see you – we would talk at length about family affairs.'<sup>175</sup> The three Simmons brothers were all involved in the 1812 retreat from Burgos, and helped each other through the appalling conditions on the retreat. George noted in his diary that: 'My brother Maud came to me, being very hungry. I luckily had just got a bag of biscuits from a store. He loaded himself and went back to his corps.'<sup>176</sup> Joseph also wrote to family, recalling George's assistance to him on the retreat: 'Near the end of the retreat I was so bad that I could hardly bear to sit upon my horse with dysentery and ague, so that my brother had me, as well as his duty, to mind.'<sup>177</sup> Brothers who met often wrote letters home together. Convalescing together after their wounding at Badajoz, William and Edward Freer wrote a joint letter reassuring their family that they were safe, William teaching himself to write his part of the letter left-handed, as his right arm had been amputated, while George Simmons reviewed Joseph's letters to his parents, and added postscripts.<sup>178</sup> In terms of significance, style, and content, joint letters mirrored the letters officers sent individually. The act of writing mutually, however, suggests an attempt at creating a sense of communal family life, with a dialogue between several members.

Having brothers nearby was not a universal blessing, and there are suggestions of tensions between brothers. In a letter to his elder brother John, William Freer wrote of his disappointment at Edward's lack of letter writing: 'I shall not make the least excuse for Edward and shall tell you candidly that it is sheer idleness that prevents his writing.'<sup>179</sup> Upon receiving word that his father intended to get another of his young brothers a commission in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot, William wrote again to John: 'My Father means to put Tom in the 43<sup>rd</sup> next volunteering. I shall kick against that, for too many brothers do not agree well in a regiment. I do not mean to say that is the case with Edward and myself.'<sup>180</sup> The death of a brother, however, was the

<sup>175</sup> Captain William Freer, 23 Feb. 1814, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', pp. 76-7.

<sup>176</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 31 Nov. 1812, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 253.

<sup>177</sup> Second Lieutenant Joseph Simmons, 5 May 1813, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 280.

<sup>178</sup> Lieutenant William Freer and Lieutenant Edward Freer, 14 Apr. 1812, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', pp. 63-4; Lieutenant George Simmons and Second Lieutenant Joseph Simmons, 5 May 1813, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 279.

<sup>179</sup> Lieutenant William Freer, 24 Jun. 1811, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 61.

<sup>180</sup> Lieutenant William Freer, unknown date in Jan. 1812, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 63.

greatest risk of having siblings on active service together. Edward Freer died during the 1814 Battle of Nivelle. Distraught, William described Edward's death in a letter to John:

during a short halt I was abruptly told of my brother's death. I borrowed my company officer's horse and hurried to the spot where he lay with his servant wounded by his side. The wound he received was instantaneous death ... He never spoke. I could remain but a few minutes with him – gave directions for his burial to be in perfect Regimentals and forced myself from him to re-join my Corps which was again advancing.<sup>181</sup>

The demands of returning to his regiment during battle evidently stymied William's capacity to attend to his brother, and interrupted his grieving process. Kennedy argued that battlefield deaths during this period were narrated in an idealised manner, with a focus on the deceased's character and sacrifice as a way of assigning meaning to loss, while civilians' conceptions of deaths in war were mediated through the sanitised, heroic language of battlefield despatches.<sup>182</sup> These factors appear to have shaped how the Freer family coped with Edward's death. Martha Freer wrote to John in December 1813: 'What comfort to my afflicted heart to know that the dear boy had fulfilled his duty and was prepared to stand before his maker with an unblemished character.'<sup>183</sup> In a similar vein, William wrote home in February 1813, hoping for peace: 'Oh! What a happy day that will be ... to see collected at your fireside your family enjoying those blessings which the exertions of so many years have at last led us so speedily to expect. 'Tis true our losses have been great but Memory will revere them.'<sup>184</sup>

While the interactions between brothers on campaign reveal a level of mutual dependence, what emerges from officer accounts is the paternal role elder sons assumed with their younger brothers. As noted previously, fraternal relations in Georgian Britain were weighed in eldest sons' favour, as they inherited patriarchal authority.<sup>185</sup> Elder brothers evidently expected to exercise a degree of influence over their younger brothers, as they offered advice and acted as patrons. John Freer wrote to William, then a lieutenant, asking if he would consider joining: 'the Portuguese service with Rank as Captain, promotion and pay going on the same in the British?'<sup>186</sup> The letters and journals of George Simmons reveal the level of influence elder brothers could expect to have on their younger brothers. As highlighted in Chapter Two, Simmons entered the regular army in the hopes of being able to provide for his family. In doing

<sup>181</sup> Lieutenant William Freer, 21 Nov. 1813, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 73.

<sup>182</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 77, 179-80.

<sup>183</sup> Martha Freer, 29 Dec. 1813, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 45.

<sup>184</sup> Lieutenant William Freer, 5 Feb. 1813, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 73.

<sup>185</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 186-7; Harris, 'That Fierce Edge', pp. 157-9.

<sup>186</sup> First Lieutenant John Freer, unknown date in May 1811, in Scarfe, ed., 'Letters from the Peninsula', p. 60.



so, Simmons appears to have aspired to the model of domestic householder identified earlier in this chapter. Simmons assumed much of the responsibility for his family's well-being, regularly sending home money, and sending his parents regular instructions to see that his younger siblings were attentive to their studies. Having just joined his regiment, Simmons wrote home: 'Make them good scholars, I have not the least doubt of soon taking them off your hands.'<sup>187</sup> Simmons also turned patron for his brothers. Upon hearing that Joseph had joined the navy instead of the army, Simmons sent money to save him from '*perdition and ruin*', and took steps to see him sent to the Peninsula as a volunteer.<sup>188</sup>

Simmons' exertions were not limited to financial support and advice to his parents. Once in the Peninsula with his brothers, Simmons took an interest in their conduct, and attempted to make them self-sufficient. Upon learning that Maud had a debt in London, Simmons informed his parents, that: 'I have put him upon an economical plan of paying for every article as he procures it, or go without it.'<sup>189</sup> Simmons took an even stronger interest in Joseph's well-being, and saw him transferred into the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles alongside him. Simmons wrote home stating why:

The task of instructing Joe will be a pleasure to me as far as my humble abilities go. I know Maud has not paid that attention to him I could have wished. I wrote him several plans how to proceed, but instead of studying they were playing, I suppose. However, that will not be the case with me. I shall make him keep my accounts, and set him systemically to work for some hours daily when we are not otherwise employed.<sup>190</sup>

Simmons' aim throughout appears to have been to foster independence and prudence in his brothers. Simmons wrote home of Joseph's lack of progress in December 1813: 'I got him placed in another company, as the boy wanted me to take care of his money and concerns. As I am a bird of passage, I wished to teach him to take care of himself, for fear he might be deprived of me one day or another; he then would be at a loss.'<sup>191</sup> In this regard, Simmons was attempting to promote the same qualities that parents attempted to instil in their sons through letters. Simmons' adoption of the paternalistic role was noted by those around him, particularly regarding Joseph. Simmons reported home in 1813: 'I have got the name of an old fellow. All the women say I am his father and laugh when I tell them he is my brother.'<sup>192</sup> For Simmons, therefore, the army was not a barrier to the maintenance of a family identity, but the means by

<sup>187</sup> Second Lieutenant George Simmons, 21 May 1809, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 8.

<sup>188</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 8 Dec. 1811, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 207.

<sup>189</sup> Second Lieutenant George Simmons, 29 Oct. 1809, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 37.

<sup>190</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 8 Sep. 1812, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 251.

<sup>191</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 7 Dec. 1813, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 327

<sup>192</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, 7 Dec. 1813, in Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p. 327

which he hoped to secure his family's future. Far from being in tension, the two had a complimentary relationship, to the point that Simmons' military identity could be viewed as an extension of his family identity.

Junior officers certainly came to identity closely with their regimental comrades, and could identify with an abstract concept of their regiment. Yet, there is little to suggest that junior officers saw their relationships with their comrades or regiments as supplanting the civilian aspect of their identities. Cocks' expectation that officers be totally committed to their regiment and comrades, to the detriment of their family ties, was exceptional, and likely overstated his case. Cocks himself combined the military with his family life, regularly writing letters to his family members and visiting his brother on campaign. It may be more beneficial to consider the duality of junior officers' character, albeit with attachments firmly weighted towards the family. Junior officers, therefore, maintained two concepts of the family. The first and strongest was civil, and focused on the family. Despite stressing the fraternal bonds of the regiment, junior officers frequently sought the support of their families, and took great strides to maintain relationships and connections with family members via letters. For some families, military and family lives were indistinguishable, as families shared campaign experiences. The second was military, and based on the mutual bonds formed within the regiment. This concept was more fluid than junior officers' family identities, and allowed for officers to form multiple attachments. As noted by Neil Ramsey, most officers' memoirs of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the sources where regimental identities are most prominently displayed, ended with the soldier returning to the civilian world, a narrative feature which pointed to the existence of a personal identity outside of the military.<sup>193</sup>

For some officers, the pull of seeing Britain was too much, regardless of their regimental attachment. Upon resigning his commission while in the Peninsula, Lieutenant Charles Dudley Madden of the 4th Dragoons reflected in his journal: 'Took leave of my Regt. with a considerable deal of regret, as leaving what had been my home for near 3 years, but the prospect of seeing England so soon, over balanced every other reflection.'<sup>194</sup> Other officers noted that an ideal life would balance the military and civilian spheres. Celebrating nine years in the army, Second Captain William Webber of the Royal Artillery received a set of letters from home containing news of the death of a family friend, causing Webber to reflect on the value of happiness in the military and civilian worlds: 'This day 9 years ago I obtained my commission and hope the next

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<sup>193</sup> Neil Ramsey, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780-1835* (Ashgate, 2011), p. 186.

<sup>194</sup> NAM 2003-08-3, Lieutenant Charles Dudley Madden, journal, 25 Jun. 1811.

nine years may pass over with as few troubles, but with more domestic happiness, which has of late been interrupted by the death of one most dear to us.'<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Second Captain William Webber, 8 Sep. 1812, in William Webber, *With the Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Journal of 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery*, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London, 1991), p. 50.

## Chapter Five: Duelling Culture and Personal Honour

British officers saw themselves as the embodiment of honour. For junior officers, losing their reputation as a 'man of honour' could result in their demise as an officer. Being considered dishonourable could see junior officers ostracised by their peers, hounded out of a regiment, or brought before a court martial. Yet, for all the importance junior officers placed on honour, the definition of 'honourable' conduct, and the lengths officers were expected to carry the defence of their honour to, remained sketchy. Junior officers' commentary on the 1811 suicide of Colonel Bevan of the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot highlights how perceptions of honourable conduct could differ, even within the army. After being singled out by Wellington for his believed failure to contain the French breakout from Almeida in May 1811, Bevan committed suicide, rather than live with ignominy.<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant William Tomkinson of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons lamented Bevan's suicide as a regrettable exercise in personal honour: 'Lord Wellington was much enraged at this, and would never allow the thing to be inquired into, nor admit of any excuse...Colonel Bevan of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment was so much hurt at the expression in Lord Wellington's despatch... he put an end to his existence, though certainly no blame was attached to him.'<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Captain Thomas Henry Browne viewed Bevan's suicide as a failure to deal with professional pressure, and revealed his scepticism of the conceptions of honour which led to his demise:

[Bevan] ... wrote an affecting farewell to his Regiment and shot himself. There have not been wanting those who have blamed Lord Wellington for this act of a gallant and sensitive mind, but it is hard indeed if a General commanding cannot, at his discretion, use terms of censure or of praise...Officers of superior rank were included in the same disapprobation with Lieut. Colonel Bevan, and yet they bore it calmly, and in a very few weeks nothing more was thought of the affair.<sup>3</sup>

Tomkinson's observations sympathise with a code of masculinity which prioritised an officer's sense of gentlemanly honour over bodily welfare, while Browne's approval of other officers who reacted 'calmly' to Wellington's criticisms suggests that a concurrent strain of masculinity was also in existence, which did not see personal honour as being more valuable than an officer's life.

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<sup>1</sup> Bevan's life was the subject of a relatively recent work which attempted to exonerate him from blame in the Almeida affair, see Archie Hunter, *Wellington's Scapegoat: The Tragedy of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Bevan* (Barnsley, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular War and Waterloo Campaign, 1809-1815*, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1895), p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), pp. 142-143.

As suggested by John Lynn in his study of honour and virtue in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic-era French army, honour was a nebulous concept which operated on several levels of meaning.<sup>4</sup> This is also true of the British army of the same period, where honour could tie individual officers to their regiments, or to the nation. This chapter explores duelling culture within the British officer corps to investigate personal honour, and examine how honour impacted on relations between officers. Duelling was central to eighteenth-century British debates over honour. Early-eighteenth century conceptions of honour in Britain were inherently bound to an aristocratic code of conduct which stressed the importance of reputation and courage to social status, to the point of defending both by fighting a duel.<sup>5</sup> Under the code of honour, any dispute or insult which impugned a gentleman's reputation was expected to be responded to with a challenge. Failure to do so was seen as a failure of courage, compounding the dishonour experienced by the offended party.<sup>6</sup> As the eighteenth century progressed, however, the honour code and duelling were increasingly out of step with civilian mores, particularly with the values of politeness and the increasing importance of the rule of law. Donna Andrew has revealed how, by the late-eighteenth century, there were three main schools of thought about duelling: those who applauded duelling; those who acknowledged duels as unfortunate, but necessary; and those who opposed duelling outright.<sup>7</sup> Despite declining in frequency throughout the eighteenth century, duels continued to be fought and were especially prominent within the military. Christopher Duffy and Armstrong Starkey have highlighted how the importance of aristocratic conceptions of honour and courage to eighteenth-century European armies made duels more likely within the army.<sup>8</sup> The ongoing importance of an aristocratic honour code to the British army is reflected in the number of duels fought by army officers. Robert Shoemaker revealed that military duels made up nearly half of all reported duels fought in Britain during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The prominence of duels amongst army officers has seen army officers included in wider studies of duelling. As yet; however, there has been no specific study of duelling within the

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<sup>4</sup> John A. Lynn, 'Toward an Army of Honor: The Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1989), p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> For aristocratic honour culture, Donna Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT, 2013), pp. 17-20; Stephen Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets: The Duel and the English Gentleman, 1750-1850* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 4-23; V.G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 46-91.

<sup>6</sup> Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 285-98; Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 43-62.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London, 1987), pp. 74-80; Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport, CT, 2003), pp. 69-104.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel: Masculinity, Honour, and Ritual Violence in London, 1660-1800', *The Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), p. 540.

army.<sup>10</sup> Duelling culture was not as absolute as it has appeared in some scholarship on honour and the army. Some scholars have suggested that the officer corps' emphasis on honour ensured that there was a degree of inevitability to officers fighting a duel once they had been drawn into a dispute. Starkey argued that duelling was virtually a necessity for officers to prove their worth in eighteenth-century armies, particularly for officers of non-aristocratic backgrounds who needed to display their willingness to adhere to an aristocratic code of conduct.<sup>11</sup> Duffy similarly argued that duels were the unavoidable outcome of the aristocratic code of honour which dominated eighteenth-century European armies.<sup>12</sup> Arthur Gilbert has explored the relationship between military law and honour during the eighteenth century, and revealed how officers could be brought to trial by their peers if they failed to defend their honour in a duel.<sup>13</sup>

Junior officer accounts and general courts martial records from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars suggest that duelling was coming under increasing criticism within the officer corps by the late-eighteenth century. While maintaining an honourable reputation amongst peers was essential for junior officers, it was not inevitable that officers would fight a duel to preserve their honour. Junior officers drew on critiques of duelling culture, and could seek redress through courts martial, which diminished the importance of duelling within the army. Furthermore, duels appear only intermittently and as an object of curiosity in junior officer accounts suggesting that duels were not unheard of, but occurred infrequently. Only two of the seventy-seven officers considered by this study, David Powell and Thomas Evans, admitted in their narratives that they had fought a duel. The first section of this chapter reveals how officers could articulate criticisms of duelling culture and repudiate a staunch obsession with personal honour. The second section examines courts martial records where officers were brought to trial for acting uncivilly to other officers, or for duelling offences. These records suggest that recourse to military law was an important factor in weakening duelling culture. The third section explores the importance of personal honour to comradeship between officers, and highlights how this relationship could lead officers to fight a duel to preserve their honour. The final section considers the relationship between personal honour and the military hierarchy, and reveals how submitting to authority could conflict with their sense of personal honour.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 58-62.

<sup>11</sup> Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 71-8.

<sup>12</sup> Duffy, *The Military Experience*, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Gilbert, 'Law and Honour among Eighteenth-Century British Army Officers', *The Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), pp. 75-87.

### ***Confronting Honour***

The honour code and duelling, its most infamous component, were the subject of intense debate in eighteenth-century Britain, with these debates attracting considerable scholarly attention. The honour code was an elite form of masculinity that demanded a gentleman should prioritise his honour and reputation over his personal welfare. A gentleman's honour was conceived of as an outwardly projected value, and was grounded in the esteem which other gentlemen held him.<sup>14</sup> As highlighted by Markku Peltonen, gentlemanly honour in early-eighteenth century England was bound to notions of civility. Being treated with civility by other gentlemen was an indication that an individual was considered as a gentleman by his peers.<sup>15</sup> Being treated uncivilly by being the recipient of an insult or slight, therefore, could be perceived as an affront to a gentleman's sense of status.<sup>16</sup> Whether or not a gentleman was deemed to be 'dishonourable' after having been insulted was his response. Duelling was theorised as a way of protecting honour after receiving an insult. By challenging the insulting party and then facing fire, the offended gentleman demonstrated his willingness to risk his bodily welfare in defence of his reputation amongst his peers. In doing so, a gentleman proved his courage, a vital component of elite masculinity.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, by failing to respond to an insult in an appropriate and timely way cast doubt on whether a gentleman valued his reputation and could face derision from honour conscious peers.<sup>18</sup> There was an important class element to duelling. By highlighting their courage in such a way, elites reiterated their place at the head of society, with their courage seen to demonstrate their utility to the nation.<sup>19</sup>

Eighteenth-century European armies were seen to adhere to these values stridently, particularly within the officer corps. A strong investment in honour was theorised to instil a sense of duty in officers, as a concern for personal reputation was seen to compel officers to demonstrate their courage and regulate their conduct in war.<sup>20</sup> Some military theorists supported duelling within the military, as the practice would ensure that only men who valued bravery and courage would remain in the army. In the 1790 text, *The Principles of Duelling*, Samuel Stanton, a former British lieutenant, argued for the value of honour and duelling culture: 'No character can be more respectable than that of a man of real courage and honour; when a

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<sup>14</sup> Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England*, pp. 160-1.

<sup>15</sup> Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England*, pp. 160-1.

<sup>16</sup> Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England*, pp. 167-8; Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, p. 19; Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 43-62.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Kiernan, *The Duel in European History*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>19</sup> Kiernan, *The Duel in European History*, p. 159.

<sup>20</sup> Duffy, *The Military Experience*, pp. 76-80; Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, p. 71.

man possesses one of those amiable qualities, the other constantly accompanies it.'<sup>21</sup> A concern for honour as it related to duty was seen to stem from a zealous defence of personal honour, which included duelling. V.G. Kiernan highlighted how duels fought between officers over points of personal honour were seen to inculcate courage and the wider commitment to duty that was demanded of eighteenth-century army officers.<sup>22</sup> Within the pressurised world of the officer corps, refusing to fight a duel when insulted was a considerable slight on an officer's honour, which could see an officer ostracised as lacking in courage.<sup>23</sup> In his study of the relationship between military law, honour, and the eighteenth-century British officer corps, Arthur Gilbert highlighted how regiments used courts martial proceedings to pass judgement on officers who refused to defend their reputation.<sup>24</sup>

Set against these established values of honour and courage were increasing criticisms of the code of honour and duelling. The arguments against duelling were manifold; however, the code of honour in Britain was particularly undermined by the rise of politeness as a model of male interaction which undermined the ideological basis of honour and duelling culture. 'Polite' critiques of duelling undermined the image of duelling as a symbol of gentility and refinement. As highlighted by Philip Carter in his study of polite masculinity, an obtuse defence of one's honour and duelling were portrayed as 'brutish' by proponents of polite sociability, who valued magnanimity, civility, and self-restraint in interpersonal conduct.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Peltonen revealed how critics of duelling saw refinement as the path to ensuring 'true' civility, as opposed to artificial civility imposed by the threat of violence.<sup>26</sup> In two important studies, Shoemaker has revealed how a combination of cultural factors, such as evolving conceptions of honour, a belief in polite interaction, and the growing importance of the courts as an arena for conflict resolution all combined to reduce the number of duels fought during the eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the principles of honour were coming under criticism, as distinctions were made between 'true' and 'false' honour. As highlighted by Andrew, critics of the honour code saw an overbearing concern for honour to be little more than an attempt at asserting authority, rather than a reflection of internal virtue.<sup>28</sup> Despite the strong concern for honour amongst army officers, the army was not insulated from these debates over honour. After devoting

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<sup>21</sup> Samuel Stanton, *The Principles of Duelling: with Rules to be Observed in Every Particular Respecting It* (London, 1790), p. 50.

<sup>22</sup> Kiernan, *The Duel in European History*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 5-62; Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 71-8; Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel', p. 540.

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert, 'Law and Honour', pp. 75-87.

<sup>25</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England*, pp. 244-62.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Shoemaker, 'Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London', *Social History*, 26 (2001), pp. 190-208; Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel', pp. 525-45.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 21-2.



considerable space to defining 'true' from 'false' honour, the *Military Mentor* informed prospective officers that, 'The principle of Duelling is very far from constituting an essential and necessary part of true courage.'<sup>29</sup> As highlighted by Carter, polite theorists were engaged in attempting to redefine honour as it related to the military. Polite ideals stressed that courage, bravery, and honour were the product of refinement, rather than anger or violence.<sup>30</sup> Shoemaker has suggested that not all officers were adherents to the honour code, with many officers favouring refinement, rather than the belligerent defence of reputation, as the measure of honour.<sup>31</sup>

It was through the prism of these debates that junior officers interpreted duelling culture within the officer corps. It is evident from junior officer accounts that not all junior officers were adherents to the honour code. Some officers saw duellists within the military as proponents of an outmoded and shallow culture, who attempted to force other officers to fight duels to assert their authority. Two instances described by Lieutenant Thomas Evans of the 8<sup>th</sup> Foot and Ensign Robert Bakewell of the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot, best illustrate how officers could apply arguments against duelling. Both officers were from families of reasonably low social standing. Evans was the son of inn keepers, while Bakewell was from a small farming family. Stationed in Minorca in 1800, Evans fought a duel with an officer of his regiment after two officers fraudulently accused him of failing to attend a point of duty.<sup>32</sup> Evans was convinced that this was an attempt to coerce him into a duel, which he did so reluctantly. Evans wrote in his diary: 'finding explanation only provoked a further degree of (what I am satisfied was premeditated) brutal insolence, I was obliged (painfully I confess) to meet them this morning.'<sup>33</sup> Bakewell faced similar provocation from McChord, a senior lieutenant who had taken temporary command of his company on arrival in Portugal. Following a disagreement over payment to the company's soldiers, McChord threatened Bakewell with confinement. In response, Bakewell:

told him that he had not the power, he still persisted in having that legal influence, in answer to which I said, "You lie Sir, nor will I advance money for them," when he immediately turned round, and said that was just what he wanted nor did he dispute me any longer ... he insisted on fighting me, for telling him the lie.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Anon., *The Military Mentor: Being a Series of Letters Recently Written by a General Officer to his Son*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. I (London, 1804), p. 290.

<sup>30</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, pp. 75-6.

<sup>31</sup> Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel', p. 540.

<sup>32</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 1995-09-01, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 13 Jun. 1800, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> NAM 1995-09-01, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 13 Jun. 1800, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Robert Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, p. 60.

Aside from McChord's goading, Bakewell, an English officer in the Irish dominated Inniskilling Fusiliers, was suspicious that he had fallen prey to a conspiratorial group of Irish officers:

Phillips [McChord's second] press'd hard for me to accept Sampson for a second, but as these four Irishmen was complete strangers to me, that is William Moore – the captain, and James McChord, R. Phillips, J.W. Sampson subalterns ... I thought it prudent to have somebody with me that would see justice done, and who I knew would have an interest in my reputation.<sup>35</sup>

While Bakewell's account plays off the stereotype of the Irish as fiery duellists who existed on the edges of European politeness, this incident illustrates how provocation could be used, even by seconds, who were expected to act as mediators in disputes.<sup>36</sup>

In describing their opponents, Evans and Bakewell drew on anti-duelling critiques which undermined duelling by representing the proponents of duelling as self-serving and damaging to society.<sup>37</sup> In Evans' case, honour is depicted as a destructive force, the cause of incivility, rather than its guarantor. By encouraging violence as a way of testing Evans' sense of honour, the antagonists had promoted disharmony. It was the power of honour to subvert the respect which was seen to unite the officer corps which outraged Evans, as the deliberate insults he suffered came from two of his 'brother officers.'<sup>38</sup> In Bakewell's account McChord is portrayed as distinctly lacking in virtue, an opportunistic bully who had only briefly held his new-found authority before he 'lustily attacked' the unsuspecting Bakewell.<sup>39</sup> Compounding this image was McChord's subsequent disbarment from joining the regiment on campaign, with his captain citing previous poor conduct.<sup>40</sup> McChord, therefore, was cast as an outlier: a man of honour ostracised by legitimate authority and the rule of law. Completing the farcical image of duellists was the unwillingness of proponents of the honour code to adhere to their own rules: upon joining the 27<sup>th</sup>, Phillips complained of Bakewell not fighting McChord, but when challenged by Bakewell: 'however anxious he was for me to fight McChord, he would not stand the brush himself.'<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, pp. 60-1.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Bartlett, 'Britishness, Irishness, and the Act of Union', in *Acts of Union: The Causes, Contexts, and Consequences of the Act of Union*, ed. Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (Dublin 2001), pp. 250-3; James Kelly, *'That Damn'd Thing Called Honour: Duelling in Ireland, 1570-1860'* (Cork, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Donna Andrew, 'The Code of Honour and Its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850', *Social History*, 5 (1980), pp. 417-23.

<sup>38</sup> NAM 1995-09-01, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 13 Jun. 1800, p. 61.

<sup>39</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Bakewell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Robert Bakewell', Vol. I, p. 61.

The opposition to duelling culture is reflective of a wider debate about the relationship between honour and the military. There is evidence to suggest that the staunch protection of individual honour was seen by some officers as unnecessary. Preparing siege trenches for the 1807 siege of Copenhagen, Captain Charles Pasley of the Royal Engineers, received what he believed was unfair criticism of his work from a colonel: '[D'Arcy] says it would draw us into a focus of fire & that some people who think themselves brave would only have their brains beat out in the attempt. Loudly he calls us two insidious gentlemen.'<sup>42</sup> While still stung by this condemnation, Pasley chose instead to ignore the affront and noted: 'Disapprobation unmerited in all cases only deserves contempt for two days.'<sup>43</sup> Often, the values of the honour code were contrasted with a growing concern for military expediency, a contributing factor in the growing professionalisation of the British officer corps. This was especially true of junior officers criticising superiors for prioritising their personal reputation over the demands of a particular situation. The questioning of this relationship can be seen as early as 1794. Describing an engagement during the Low Countries campaign, Lieutenant Thomas Powell of the 14<sup>th</sup> Foot was critical of the actions of his general, whose sense of honour made him reluctant to withdraw:

our Genl. Being tenacious of his Honour & never having the command of an out post before, did not think it rite to retire without Seeing the Enemy, altho he could hear their shot very plain, & did not obey Hammerstein's orders, by making an excuse of their not being in writing. In consequence of the ignorance and obstinacy of our Commander keeping us in this situation, we were perfectly cut off from the Town in a short time.<sup>44</sup>

The aristocratic Captain Edward Charles Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons similarly reflected on the value, or otherwise, of personal honour to cavalry units on outpost duty:

In an open country eight or ten men cannot think of fighting and can always gallop away, whereas stronger picquets do not think it honourable to retreat without at least skirmishing with the enemy's advanced guard. Then they get men and horses wounded and, on trying to bring them off, the whole get into a scrape.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The British Library, London (hereafter, BL) Add. Ms. 41975, Captain Charles Pasley, 6 Sep. 1807, 'The Pasley Papers, Vol. XV.'

<sup>43</sup> BL Add. Ms. 41975, Captain Charles Pasley, 6 Sep. 1807, 'The Pasley Papers, Vol. XV'.

<sup>44</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Thomas Powell, 'Diary of Captain Thomas Powell', p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, journal, 21 Jun. 1811, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812*, ed. Julia Page (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), p. 121.

Evidently, 'honour' as conceived of by junior officers was not synonymous with the principles of the honour code which idolised the defence of personal reputation at the expense of other concerns. Extreme displays of concern for personal honour, such as fighting a duel or refusing to retreat from combat, could be seen as outmoded and detrimental behaviour.

### ***Duelling and the Law***

A key argument used against honour and duelling culture during the eighteenth century was that this informal code of conduct and dispute resolution undermined the rule of law by placing authority in the hands of individuals.<sup>46</sup> Duelling was illegal under both civilian and military law. Section 7 of the articles of war was an explicit attempt to stifle duelling culture within the military: any officer who used provoking language, sent a challenge, acted as a second, or pressured another officer into a duel could be court martialled and was liable to be cashiered.<sup>47</sup> Illegality alone was not enough to prevent duelling. In his study of duelling in eighteenth-century England, Stephen Banks highlighted how courts were reluctant to condemn duellists, and argued that severe penalties imposed by the courts did not contribute greatly to the decline of duelling culture.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, proponents of duelling argued that duelling provided a means of redress for offences that could not be adequately dealt with in the court room, resulting in what Banks described as an undercurrent of 'general derision' towards gentlemen who used the courts to resolve disputes.<sup>49</sup> As demonstrated by Gilbert, similar tensions between law and honour existed within the eighteenth-century army. In a study of regimental courts martial records, Gilbert found that courts martial acted as 'honour courts' as well as criminal courts, with regiments using the charge 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman' to bring officers who violated the accepted code of honour within a regiment to trial. Importantly, this could include officers who refused to respond to insults with a challenge.<sup>50</sup>

As noted by Shoemaker, the rise of polite values weakened the relationship between gentlemanliness and honour, and violence.<sup>51</sup> The reduced expectation that gentlemen would respond to insults with violence was likely to have made other forms of dispute resolution, such as the courts, more appealing to offended parties. In this instance, the flexibility of military law allowed regiments to remove dissolute officers' from their regiments and to resolve disputes

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 63-4.

<sup>47</sup> *Rules and Articles for the Better Government of All His Majesty's Forces, from the 24<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 1798* (London, 1798), pp. 19-22.

<sup>48</sup> Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 135-66.

<sup>49</sup> Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 159-61. Also see Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>50</sup> Gilbert, 'Law and Honour', pp. 75-87.

<sup>51</sup> Shoemaker, 'Male Honour', pp. 200-1.

without officers resorting to duels. As highlighted by Gilbert, the vagueness of the charge of 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman' allowed for regiments to employ it to resolve a range of offences, such as honour disputes, which defied categorisation in an prescriptive law code.<sup>52</sup> By examining general courts martial records from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars this section will explore the relationship between military law and honour. A general courts martial was the highest level of military justice. While courts martial were conducted at the regimental level, only a general courts martial had the authority to condemn a soldier to death, or to dismiss an officer from the service for 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman'.<sup>53</sup>

The malleability of this charge gave it a broad scope, and allowed officers to be tried for offences which could traditionally have resulted in a duel. The importance of polite interaction to the officer corps ensured that officers who did not adhere to the expectations of civility could lose favour amongst their comrades. This could include being brought to trial. General courts martial records feature several examples of officers who were brought to trial for acting uncivilly towards other officers. In May 1805, Lieutenant James Blake of the 44<sup>th</sup> Foot was cashiered after calling a captain: 'a jack-ass and a fool', and for 'using threatening, menacing, and insulting language' to another lieutenant.<sup>54</sup> Not content with insulting one officer, Lieutenant Eastcourt Cresswell of the 94<sup>th</sup> Foot was brought to trial in October 1808 for:

disturbing the harmony of the Officers at the mess of the regiment ... [and] persisting in defiance of the sentiments of his brother Officers, to use provoking speeches and gestures, snapping his fingers, and ... declaring in a most violent and contemptuous manner, that he did not care one damn for Lieutenant Colonel Campbell ... or for any Officers in the regiment.<sup>55</sup>

Ensign Henry Stanton of the 8<sup>th</sup> Foot was also cashiered after similar offences which he committed over a two month period in mid-1805. These included following the 8<sup>th</sup>'s surgeon home: 'and wantonly and grossly insulting him in the public streets; returning after this transaction to the Mansion-house and publicly insulting the corps', as well as confronting another ensign of the 8<sup>th</sup>: 'shaking his stick at him in a menacing manner, and desiring him to consider it as a horsewhipping'.<sup>56</sup> Confrontations where officers invoked a 'horsewhipping' was likely a deliberate attempt by officers to provoke a challenge. In civilian society, horsewhipping

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<sup>52</sup> Gilbert, 'Law and Honour', pp. 86-7.

<sup>53</sup> *Rules and Articles*, p. 62.

<sup>54</sup> Charles James, *A Collection of the Charges, Opinions, and Sentences of General Courts Martial, As Published by Authority for the Year 1795 to the Present Time* (London, 1820), pp. 193-4.

<sup>55</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 290-1.

<sup>56</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, p. 196.

a gentleman was particularly insulting, as it implied the recipient was little more than an animal or a criminal, and could quickly draw a challenge.<sup>57</sup> In each of these cases, the actions of the officers charged were the type of offences which gentlemen could have conceivably responded to by issuing a challenge. As the offended parties chose instead to pursue the matter through the courts, however, it may be theorised that there was little risk of these officers being considered 'dishonourable' for failing to call out the offensive officers.

Highlighting how the law could supersede duelling as a means of dispute resolution were courts martial where officers were brought to trial for attempting to provoke another officer into challenging them to a duel. Whereas Gilbert identified several regimental courts martial from the mid-eighteenth century where officers were found guilty for allowing themselves to be insulted, general courts martial records from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars suggest that attempting to provoke a duel with other officers was unacceptable.<sup>58</sup> In 1812, Lieutenant Charles White of the 4<sup>th</sup> West India regiment was cashiered for assaulting an officer who refused to fight a duel with him.<sup>59</sup> White was also acquitted of another charge, at the same trial, where he encouraged two officers of his regiment to fight a duel, rather than reconcile.<sup>60</sup> In February 1812, Lieutenant Dominick French of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot was cashiered for a range of duelling related offences. These included three attempts at provoking a duel by: 'using abusive and provoking language' towards other officers; fighting one duel; and attempting to recruit another officer to act as his second in a duel.<sup>61</sup> Importantly, the officer who fought a duel with French was not brought to a general court martial, suggesting that the officers of the 82<sup>nd</sup> took particular issue with French's conduct in deliberately provoking a duel, rather than the other officer who challenged him. French's trial is part of a trend of officers being brought to trial for attempting to provoke another officer into a challenge. That these officers were brought to trial by their comrades, and often found guilty, suggests that contemporary criticisms of honour and duelling culture were being inculcated by the officer corps. Within these courts martial, it can be seen that offering offence was seen as the dishonourable act, rather than unwillingness to send a challenge.

Military justice could also be a means by which officers sought to clear their names of dishonourable conduct. As noted by Gilbert, officers could request a court martial in the hope of clearing their name and honour when accused of an honour crime.<sup>62</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch

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<sup>57</sup> Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 53-5.

<sup>58</sup> Gilbert, 'Law and Honour', pp. 79-81.

<sup>59</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 437-8.

<sup>60</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 437-8.

<sup>61</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 397-8.

<sup>62</sup> Gilbert, 'Law and Honour', p. 79.

of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot suggested as much in a letter to his mother where he described the suicide of Colonel Bevan of the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot: '[Bevan] was blamed (& *I really believe unjustly*) by Lord Wellington in his dispatches for the escape of General Brennier & the garrison of Almeida, since applied for a court of enquiry that he might have an opportunity of clearing his own character and that of the regiment which his lordship thought proper to refuse.'<sup>63</sup> There is evidence to suggest, however, that there could be a degree of ambiguity in some regiments over how honourable courts martial were. Being found guilty in a court martial could have serious consequences for an officer, who could be suspended or dismissed from the army, or cashiered, the process by which an officer was reprimanded in front of his regiment and stripped of his commission.<sup>64</sup> Lieutenant George James Sullivan of the elite 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards cavalry regiment described one occasion, where he negotiated for an officer who had insulted another to leave the regiment, rather than face a court martial: 'Kelly of course was delighted I had succeeded for him & I also felt happy in being able to rescue a man from disgrace for if he had been tried there was nothing to have saved his being ruined.'<sup>65</sup>

While submitting oneself to judgment in court martial could be seen as honourable, it did not follow that bringing another officer to trial was also seen in the same light. The expectation that commanding officers act with paternal warmth and respect junior officers as gentlemen could complicate matters of military law. Evans noted how his colonel bringing a captain of his regiment to a court martial for using insulting language towards him went over badly with the regiment's officers:

'Tis impossible to describe the sensation this unfortunate dispute has created in the Regiment; Colonel Drummond who has always been beloved in the Corps, is not at present spoken to but by very few Officers; it is alleged by some that his conduct has very much changed and that these officers have been the cause of that change which has produced so many unhappy differences betwixt the Regiment and the Commanding Officer.<sup>66</sup>

The imbalance in rank between Drummond and the officer he prosecuted appeared to have been considered as a break in the commander-junior officer relationship and it is possible that if the captain were brought to a court martial for insulting a fellow captain or subaltern, that Drummond would have been viewed more favourably.

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<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 10 Jul. 1811, in Charles Kinloch, *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, 1806-16*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2007), p. 76.

<sup>64</sup> *Rules and Articles*, p. 62.

<sup>65</sup> BL RP 8211, George James Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lieutenant George James Sullivan, 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards', pp. 85-6.

<sup>66</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 19 Sep. 1799, p. 21.

Nor was it a foregone conclusion that the law would prevail over the honour code, as suggested by two courts martial of officers from the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment during the Peninsular War. Relating to trials of six officers, the surviving duellists and seconds, these courts martial appear to have attracted interest because one of the duellists in each case was killed.<sup>67</sup> Occurring in the Peninsula in June 1809 and May 1810, the fatal outcome of these duels appears to have been vital in bringing them to Wellington's attention, who ordered both courts martial.<sup>68</sup> Despite the gravity of both these courts martial, all parties were acquitted of the charges brought against them. The courts martial findings provide few specifics, other than ruling that the charges were unproven, making it difficult to determine why these trials came to nothing. A lack of evidence, either non-existent or withheld, almost certainly played a role. In the cases of Captain Arthur Morris and Lieutenant Henry Blake, both charged with being seconds in a duel in which Lieutenant William Brodie died, there was no one at the trial to give evidence: 'the Court proceeded to give public notice for the appearance of any person who could give evidence on the trial; but no person having appeared ... the Court were of the opinion the prisoner was Not Guilty.'<sup>69</sup>

There are several possibilities as to why officers were unforthcoming with evidence. The first is that there was no case against the accused officers. While conceivable, this is an unlikely reason. In both instances, Wellington had received reports from courts of inquiry into the causes of the duel and still proceeded with the courts martial.<sup>70</sup> Another is the potential for one court martial to have a flow on effect in terms of charges: the *Articles of War* dictated that any officer on guard who knowingly 'suffered' or allowed another to fight a duel would be considered as a challenger, and resulting court martial proceedings could potentially implicate other officers.<sup>71</sup> Together with these factors, it is probable that the officers of the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment did not see the duellists as criminals and 'closed ranks' to ensure that the matter proceeded no further. This is suggestive as to the presence of a culture within the 66<sup>th</sup> which condoned duelling. To bring the duellists and their seconds to trial would have been perceived as unnecessary and detrimental: the duels had resolved the dispute, while courts martialling the officers would have served only to bring them, and their regiment, into disrepute.

Not only could the relationship between law and honour be ambiguous, the two could also be conflated, as demonstrated in the August 1811 court martial of Lieutenant Edward Tully of the

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<sup>67</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 321-2, 335-7.

<sup>68</sup> Duke of Wellington, *The Despatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, ed. John Gurwood (hereafter, *WD*), (London, 1844) Vol. III, p. 322, Vol. IV, p. 31; James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 321, 355-6.

<sup>69</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, p. 322.

<sup>70</sup> Wellington, *WD*, Vol. III, p. 322, Vol. IV, p. 31.

<sup>71</sup> *Rules and Articles*, p. 20.



75<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. Tully was arraigned on the charge of: 'scandalous and infamous behaviour, unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman' for, amongst other reasons, failing to pay debts and embezzling money from the regiment.<sup>72</sup> Importantly, the officers of his regiment also brought charges against Tully for acting dishonourably on two occasions. On the first occasion, it was alleged that Tully: 'submitted to be struck by an Officer of the regiment, without taking any notice whatever of it.'<sup>73</sup> After another altercation with the same officer, Tully also found himself under suspicion for: 'making use of gross and ungentlemanlike language, which drew upon him the opprobrious epithet of coward.'<sup>74</sup> Here, Tully's refusal to adequately respond to being struck by another officer, rather than the act of hitting another officer, was seen as the dishonourable action, as were Tully's later use of offensive language and his wearing of the insult of 'coward'. On the surface, this trial supports the suggestion that fighting a duel was essential for officers who had been insulted to maintain their honour. This certainly appears to have been the case in the 75<sup>th</sup> regiment, where the honour code was perceived as law. As Tully was found not guilty of these two charges; however, it can be seen that the law could provide protection for officers who found themselves on the wrong side of the honour code. Rather than submit to fighting a duel in line with his comrade's expectations, an officer could take his case to the courts, where the weight of military law would provide some protection from his comrade's accusations.

### ***Civility, Duelling, and Comradeship***

'Civility' was inextricably linked to junior officers' identities as 'polite gentlemen' and to eighteenth-century conceptions of honour. As highlighted by Peltonen, being treated uncivilly by a gentleman could see a gentleman forced to respond with a challenge to preserve his honour.<sup>75</sup> Junior officer accounts suggest that civility and honour were linked for junior officers, as officers who acted uncivilly could be ostracised by their comrades. The diary of George Woodberry, a young lieutenant with the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, is revealing as to relationship between civility and honour. Woodberry's diary reveals how his regiment suffered poor morale throughout 1813, owing in no small part to several dissolute officers in the regiment. The divisions between the 18<sup>th</sup>'s officers highlight how junior officers' honourable reputation amongst their peers was contingent on their reputation as a 'polite gentleman'. The officer who did not conform to the standards of gentlemanly conduct found acceptance difficult. Woodberry contrasted himself with Dolbel, an unpleasant comrade:

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<sup>72</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges, Opinions, and Sentences*, p. 395.

<sup>73</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, p. 395.

<sup>74</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, p. 395.

<sup>75</sup> Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England*, pp. 167-8

Thank God I think I am so much beloved by my brother officers ... on the contrary there's Mr. Dolbel [who] the whole have cut! and shall not be surprised to hear of his leaving the Regiment. Colonel Murray a few days back refused to sign a recommendation in his favour to get him made Lieutenant. The unmanly manner in which he boasts of his amour with Lady Charlotte Howard at Brighton will bring down on him the disgust of every man of Honor.<sup>76</sup>

Having been undermined by a comrade, Burk, Woodberry linked his dishonourable actions with a lack of gentlemanliness: 'What a despicable fellow is our Capt. Burk. There's not a grain of a gentleman in him. He is the laughing stock of the Brigade. Sgt. Taylor he has brought to a Court Martial this morning, merely to annoy me, and because he thinks I have got too popular in the Regiment.'<sup>77</sup>

Unsavoury actions by officers which had the potential to attract negative attention to a regiment were swiftly responded to. Officers who were embroiled in a scandal, for example, could be obliged to resign, as noted by Keep in an 1809 letter to his mother:

We have lost many officers lately one way or another, among others Abbott and Smelt. The former was a Quaker and forced to resign, and the latter got himself involved in a very awkward affair at Southampton with an Inn Keeper's daughter, whose father entered an action against him, that has furnished a subject for the newspapers, and amusement for the gossips all round the Country of Hants.<sup>78</sup>

Informal solutions and punishments appear to have been attractive as they circumvented the public course of military justice and kept these issues 'in house'. In a letter to his uncle, Ensign John Fremantle of the Coldstream Guards remarked of a friend, Cornet Charles Bishop of the 16<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons, who was on the verge of ostracism: 'I am quite grieved at having again heard of the disgraceful manner in which Charles Bishop is still going on, several people have spoken to me advising his getting an exchange, for his conduct is so ungentlemanlike that it is impossible he can be allowed to continue in the regiment.'<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> NAM, 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 22 Mar. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar during the Year 1813', p. 55.

<sup>77</sup> NAM, 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 5 Jul. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', pp. 166-7.

<sup>78</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, Winchester, 27 Jun. 1809, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsula, 1808-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1997), p. 30.

<sup>79</sup> Ensign John Fremantle, 24 Feb. 1810, in John Fremantle, *Wellington's Voice: The Candid Letters of Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, 1808-1837*, ed. Gareth Glover (London, 2012), p.139.

Alongside civility, courage was a crucial aspect of the army's honour code. As demonstrated by Kennedy, British officers expected each other to display their bravery and courage by facing battle, with those who avoided duty or displayed cowardice being open to accusations of effeminacy, and could be ostracised.<sup>80</sup> Officers who were suspected of avoiding battle or going on campaign could draw the ire of their comrades. Woodberry wrote of a comrade who had remained in Britain rather than joining the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars in the Peninsula:

Lieut. Dunkin wrote to Colonel Murray from Brighton that he felt himself much hurt when he heard I was come out with the Regiment over his head, that his greatest wish was to go on service with the Regiment and was now ready to come immediately. All very fine talking – he knew I was coming out near a fortnight before we sailed, yet never troubled himself till near two months after. So much for Dunkin & the white feather.<sup>81</sup>

Some officers expressed concerns that they could be falsely accused of cowardice. Describing his choice to join his regiment at the 1813 Battle of Vitoria when he had a legitimate reason to be absent, Ensign George Hennell of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot suggested that his absence may have been misinterpreted as cowardice: 'You will see by my preceding letter that I might have been absent from the battle of the 21<sup>st</sup> [Vitoria] as I was on command, yet such is the high sense of honour in our regiment that in all probability they would have joked me about it for some time.'<sup>82</sup>

Junior officers, therefore, would only pay fealty to their comrades when they were convinced of their honour. This relationship between honour and comradeship could draw junior officers into duels when their peers expected other officers to defend their honour at the risk of injury or death. Duels appear to have occurred infrequently, suggesting that alternative forms of dispute resolution were generally effective. Furthermore, duels were the end point of a process of mediation that could see disputes resolved amicably. Before a duel took place, each duellist was expected to enlist a 'second', who would act as an intermediary between the two parties, attempt to reconcile the duellists where possible, and oversee any duel which arose from the dispute.<sup>83</sup> As noted by Banks, the honour of 'seconds' could also be at stake in duels, suggesting

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<sup>80</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Civilian and Military Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 44.

<sup>81</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 16 Mar. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 50.

<sup>82</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 8 Jul. 1813, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812-1813*, ed. Michael Glover (London, 1979), p. 102.

<sup>83</sup> Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel', p. 535; Banks, *A Polite Exchange of Bullets*, pp. 114-34.

that duels could entangle individuals not directly related to the dispute.<sup>84</sup> This occurred in the case of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars when some officers refused to act as a second for an officer:

Now those very men have always pretended the greatest friendship for him, hung to him like leaches. But Dolbel had a large stock of hams, tongues &c. He had likewise a private servant, who always cooked good dinners. ... when the man wanted their assistance and advice, they had not known him long enough, he was nearly a stranger unto them. They therefore declined the honour. The more I see of the World, the more ingratitude I discover in it.<sup>85</sup>

This process of mediation appears to have prevented a reasonable number of disputes from reaching the stage of a duel. Acting as a second on several occasions where he circumvented duels, Sullivan boasted: 'my friends *never* once apologised, yet it was a painful thing to be concerned in among brother officers.'<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Keep managed to secretly reconcile two officers of his regiment who were intent on fighting a duel. In a letter to his mother, Keep revealed: 'had it been found out my conduct would have been considered highly dishonourable, and I should have been termed a liar etc. ... and have got into a hobble perhaps myself.'<sup>87</sup>

In certain instances, duelling was a means by which an officer could maintain his honourable reputation amongst his comrades once his gentlemanly reputation had been brought into question. In duels, the values of civility and courage converged, as officers could maintain their honour through a conspicuous display of courage after they had been treated un-civilly. This concern over reputation suggests that honour was an outward value, as further highlighted by the performative dimension of duels. As noted by Matthew McCormack, performance was central to Georgian masculinities, with men expected not only to espouse certain characteristics, but to embody them in their actions.<sup>88</sup> Duelling was a physical manifestation of an officer's honour. By taking part in a ritualised duel, an officer stated his willingness to risk his welfare for his reputation, while his braving injury or death proved his courage to his fellow officers. As a ceremonial form of violence which took place in front of an audience of 'seconds', duels were somewhat theatrical. There were no commonly accepted rules to duelling during the eighteenth century; however, and details such as how far apart combatants should stand, or how many

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<sup>84</sup> Stephen Banks, 'Dangerous Friends: The Second and the Later English Duel', *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 32 (2009), p. 92.

<sup>85</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 13 Jul. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 178.

<sup>86</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan', p. 92.

<sup>87</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 10 Sep. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 94.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 35-44.

shots should be fired, depended on the individuals involved.<sup>89</sup> Just as in civilian society, the form that military duels took varied. Sullivan described one duel in the Peninsula, where two officers fired at each other across a river, while Lieutenant David Powell of the 14th Light Dragoons fought one duel where his opponent: 'put himself in the most determined attitude with his legs far asunder by which means his body was lowered.'<sup>90</sup>

The threat of being challenged to a duel was seen to regulate officers' behaviour, and to ensure that the rules of civil interaction were maintained. Describing an argument between two officers of his regiment, Keep noted to his mother that the threat of a duel was an accepted result of uncivil behaviour: 'The rules of the service are very rigid in these cases, so that no two officers can have the privilege of calling each other names even without being compelled to call each other out.'<sup>91</sup> Woodberry described one instance in 1813 where attempts to correct the uncivil behaviour of a comrade, Dolbel, proved fruitless, raising the spectre of a duel:

Smith seriously afraid he must call Dolbel out & fight him before he can bring the fellow to a true sense of honour & good behaviour; being in the same house with Dolbel, Smith is compelled to put up with a great deal of insolence, and it's more than Kennedy & Smith can do to keep him at all in bounds.<sup>92</sup>

Smith's hope that a challenge would have a corrective effect on Dolbel highlights how duels could act as a prop for polite masculinity within the officer corps. The threat of violence for officers who breached the accepted standards of civility acted as a regulatory mechanism, ensuring that these standards were maintained. There are also examples, however, of the opposite occurring. Newly arrived at his regiment in the West Indies in 1804, Ensign Thomas Staunton St. Clair noted that a spate of recent duels had shattered the regiment's camaraderie: 'At the mess-table I noticed a great reserve among the officers, as if each considered himself liable to a challenge for expressing his ideas upon any subject whatever.'<sup>93</sup>

Within certain regiments, it was when a challenge was not forthcoming after an insult being offered that junior officers could find their honour under question. Woodberry described one incident, where the officers of the 18<sup>th</sup> assembled to pass judgement on two officers who quarrelled in front of the entire regiment, and: 'came to the unanimous resolution that they

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<sup>89</sup> Shoemaker, 'The Taming of the Duel', pp. 533-5.

<sup>90</sup> National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter, NLI) Ms. 1577, David Powell, 'Some Account of a Campaign in 1794', p. 274.

<sup>91</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep 10 Sep. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 93.

<sup>92</sup> Lieutenant George Woodberry, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', 25 Mar. 1813, NAM 1968-07-267, p. 57.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Staunton St. Clair, *A Residence in the West Indies and America, with a Narrative of the Expedition to the Island of Walcheren*, Vol. I (London, 1834), pp. 102-3.

ought to be required to [re]sign immediately.’<sup>94</sup> While the 18<sup>th</sup>’s commander overruled the officers in the hope of using the encounter as a warning, he suggested that a duel would have seen the officers save face: ‘Major H. told them of the sentiments of the officers ... that the language made use of by both was such which ought to have obliged gentlemen to have had immediate recourse to arms & that death alone ought to have settled it between them.’<sup>95</sup>

Describing a series of insults that were not met with challenges, or where an officer refused to fight, Sullivan noted that it was common to see these officers hounded out of the regiment: ‘Davis for not noting the first insult offered by Kelly was obliged to sell & struck out of the Regt ... Lt. Moore was situated much like Davis towards Kelly & he was also turned adrift – Lt. Mayne nearly shared the same fate.’<sup>96</sup> It is likely that honour and duelling culture was strongest in regiments with a strong aristocratic culture. Serving with the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars and the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, Woodberry and Sullivan were both in aristocratically inclined cavalry regiments, suggesting a correlation between these elite regiments and the expectation that officers would fight a duel after having been insulted.

The importance of duelling to individual officers’ identities as ‘men of honour’ should not be overstated. While officers may have considered fighting a duel to be necessary, junior officers often viewed duelling culture as coercive. The fear of being dishonoured or ostracised could shame unwilling officers into fighting a duel. Having just fought a duel, Evans wrote in his diary: ‘However detestable is the professed duellist, I find it impossible, some time or other in man’s life, to avoid being concerned in one, without suffering insults and insolence.’<sup>97</sup> Fearful of being involved in a duel, Keep wrote to his mother that he would, nevertheless, go through with one rather than face dishonour: ‘it is not the most agreeable alternative to be obliged to shoot each other. There is no other however, unless you should happen to be quite by yourselves, or compromise your honour in the company of a third person, which indeed most of us have too much pride to do.’<sup>98</sup> In these cases, duelling culture appears hollow, with officers motivated to fight out of fear, rather than a belief in the principles of duelling. While maintaining an honourable reputation amongst other officers was essential for junior officers, this was not necessarily equated with duelling. Officers could be ostracised for failing to adhere to the standards of polite gentlemanliness and civility, without a duel taking place. Furthermore, even when a duel occurred, a lack of belief in duelling culture on the part of duellists suggests that

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<sup>94</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 12 Jul. 1813, ‘The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar’, pp. 176-7.

<sup>95</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 12 Jul. 1813, ‘The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar’, pp. 176-7.

<sup>96</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, ‘The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan’, pp. 90-1.

<sup>97</sup> NAM 1995-09-101 Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 13 Jun. 1800, p. 61.

<sup>98</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 10 Sep. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 93.

contemporary criticisms of duelling were undermining the importance of duelling in maintaining relations between officers.

### ***Challenging Authority***

As well as informing horizontal relations between officers of comparable rank, personal honour could also influence vertical bonds between superior and junior officers. In his study of American army officers, Morris Janowitz argued that the American officer corps inculcated many aspects of British aristocratic codes of military honour, which included personal fealty to superior officers.<sup>99</sup> Junior officers' expectation that they be treated with paternal warmth and gentlemanly respect likely encouraged loyalty to commanders that was personal, rather than structural. Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards noted how personal ties counted for as much as rank in matters of authority: 'On this day was decided a question between Sir G. Stirling, Coldstream, and Captain Horne, 3<sup>rd</sup> Guards. Sir B. Spencer and General Campbell decided that a superior officer of a different (or even the same regiment) had not right to put an inferior officer under arrest whilst the inferior's commanding officer was on the ground.'<sup>100</sup> While Mills' account is of a disagreement between two senior officers over a point of authority, this episode is still illustrative of the connection between personal relationships and the boundaries of authority. Authority based on personal bonds could undermine regimental cohesion, as subordinate officers displayed divided loyalties. Writing to his mother, Keep described how a dispute between three field officers of his regiment, had divided the junior ranks: 'This sort of jealousy frequently exists in Regiments, so much so that sometimes the officers are divided into parties and won't speak to each other. A good deal exists here, some officers being adherents to Whitelock, some to Maddison, and others again to Spry.'<sup>101</sup>

The emphasis on personal bonds between superior and junior officers could become entangled with honour disputes, and a superior officer who was seen by his subordinates as acting dishonourably could undermine his authority. The 8<sup>th</sup> Foot was thrown into turmoil in the winter of 1799 and 1800, as its colonel brought a captain to court martial, an action which was seen by sections of his regiment as dishonourable. Seeing the officers of his regiment speaking out in defiance his colonel in the wake of this incident, Evans reflected on how personal connections overrode the structural authority of rank: 'Many officers shewed the greatest and open indignation at the sentence ... I could wish Officers would less indulge their personal

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<sup>99</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL, 1960), p. 261.

<sup>100</sup> Ensign John Mills, journal, 18 Jun. 1811, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-14*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), p. 43.

<sup>101</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 24 May 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 26.

feelings on matters of a Military Question.’<sup>102</sup> In the hope of ending the turmoil which was plaguing the regiment, the 8<sup>th</sup>’s officers later attempted to resolve the problem by forcing officers to respect authority on their honour, with every officer signing an accord: ‘binding each of them to constant support of their Commanding Officers.’<sup>103</sup>

Within this context, junior officers could interpret being censured by superiors as an affront to their gentlemanly honour, as evidenced by instances of junior officers challenging superior officers to duels. Of twenty-six general courts martial of junior officers for duelling related offences in the period 1796-1815, ten involved a challenge being sent to a superior officer.<sup>104</sup> In these cases, challenging, or attempting to provoke a challenge from, a superior officer was a means of contesting authority. In several of these courts martial, disputes arose from matters of daily duty and reprimands delivered from senior to junior officers. In 1802, Lieutenant Alex Bruce was court martialled for abandoning guard duty in disobedience of orders from his captain, and also for having sent that same captain a challenge four days later.<sup>105</sup> While the record does not make clear what occurred in the interval between Bruce absenting himself from duty and the sending of the challenge, the proximity of the two events makes it likely that they are connected, and that the challenge was sent in response to the fall-out over Bruce’s inattention to duty. This theme can also be seen in the 1813 court martial of Ensign Alexander Blood. Having being imprisoned for brawling with a fellow ensign and abusing other officers, Blood challenged his lieutenant colonel after being ordered under arrest.<sup>106</sup> Even adhering to a regiment’s uniform could create tension between superiors and subordinates. In 1812, Captain J. Francis L’Estrange of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot was court martialled for continual refusal to appear on parade dressed in his uniform and carrying his sword. Additionally, L’Estrange was also brought to trial on the suspicion of having sent his regiment’s commander a challenge in response to being ordered to wear his uniform.<sup>107</sup> In each of these instances, the obstinate refusal of junior officers to accept the authority of senior officers not only illustrates the value which junior officers could place personal honour, but how this sense of honour could exist in a state of tension with the military hierarchy.

The tension between honour codes and military hierarchies could create an ambiguous situation where it was unclear how and when junior officers should act in defence of their honour. One such situation is apparent in the unpublished memoir of Lieutenant George James

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<sup>102</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 24 Sep. 1800, p. 21.

<sup>103</sup> NAM, 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 10 June 1800, p. 62.

<sup>104</sup> Figures taken from James, *A Collection of the Charges*.

<sup>105</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 109-10.

<sup>106</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 508-9.

<sup>107</sup> James, *A Collection of the Charges*, pp. 448-9.



Sullivan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards. Sullivan's relationship with his commander, Major Camac, demonstrates how junior officers could be obliged to balance the demands of personal honour, while remaining respectful of military law. Just as his regiment was preparing to depart Britain for the Peninsula, Sullivan came into conflict with Camac over a maid servant. Having been denigrated by Camac to members of the regiment, Sullivan sought Camac out for an explanation. Camac responded by stating, that, if Sullivan was: 'offended with what he had said, I was not to consider him my Commanding Officer, that he wore a brown coat and was my humble servant at any time I pleased to call him out.'<sup>108</sup> Suspecting a trap, Sullivan refused to offer Camac a challenge, given that a subsequent court martial would 'ruin' him.<sup>109</sup> Despite refusing to offer a challenge, Sullivan also felt it necessary to see that his honour was not questioned, and ensured that there were witnesses to the exchange:

retorted the major immediately, "Is that what you mean?" intending to infer that I was afraid to call him out. "No, Major Camac" said I, "If you go to such lengths and oblige me to speak out, I beg to tell you there stands Captain Whale, and if you will repeat before him what you have said to me I will fight you in five minutes." "I shall not, Sir" replied the gallant Major and away he turned upon his heels.<sup>110</sup>

While Sullivan's memoir is consciously anti-militaristic and drew on eighteenth-century anti-aristocratic discourses to portray Camac as corrupt and vain, Sullivan's account is still revealing as to the precarious situation in which junior officers could find themselves in relation to honour codes and the military hierarchy. Sullivan's unwillingness to call out a superior for fear of a court martial, yet his unwillingness to compromise his honour highlights how honour was a complex concept for junior officers. While being honourable was an imperative and ensured an officer's ongoing acceptance by his peers, the defence of that honour could also be an undoing.

Personal honour and its associated qualities of gentlemanliness and bravery were central to interpersonal relations within the British officer corps. Maintaining an honourable reputation amongst other officers was essential for junior officers, which they were expected to display through their personal courage and by acting civilly towards other officers. It was not inevitable, however, that the British officer corps' continuing association with an aristocratic honour code would lead junior officers into duels as a way of proving their honour to their comrades. Army officers were amongst the most prominent duellists in eighteenth-century Britain and may have been more likely to fight a duel than civilians, yet the army was not immune to the growing criticisms of duelling. Junior officers could be disdainful of duellists, while general courts

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<sup>108</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan', pp. 6-7.

<sup>109</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan', p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lt. George James Sullivan', pp. 7-8.

martial records suggest that military law was generally effective at curtailing duels. While occasional instances of duels or potential duels are evident in junior officers' accounts, there is the sense that junior officers could be drawn into these disputes unwillingly, rather than through a belief in the value of duelling.

## Chapter Six: Leading the Ranks

The retreat of the British army to Corunna during late 1808 and early 1809 was, perhaps, the most tormenting experience British soldiers endured during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. With food in short supply, the British retreated through the Galician mountains during the dead of winter; plagued by cold, rain, and snow; and harassed by the pursuing French army. Discipline broke down, as soldiers turned to plunder to survive, and the retreating army left stragglers behind. In amongst the chaos, British junior officers struggled to maintain discipline. Lieutenant Robert Blakeney of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot described the scenes as his regiment marched into, and staggered out, of a Spanish town: 'Beimbibre exhibited all the appearance of a place lately stormed and pillaged. Every door and window was broken, every lock and fastening forced. Rivers of wine ran through the houses and into the streets, where lay fantastic groups of soldiers.'<sup>1</sup> So it continued, Blakeney and his fellow officers using: 'every exertion to restore order and discipline' on the remainder of the retreat, including the execution of a ranker for plunder.<sup>2</sup> By turning to corporal punishment to enforce authority, Blakeney seemed to conform to the popular image of leadership in the eighteenth-century British army, where a socially remote officer corps maintained control over the rank and file through severe discipline. Another officer on the retreat, Captain Alexander Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars, offered a more nuanced approach to leadership, noting in his journal that he and his fellow officers: 'exerted themselves to the utmost of their ability to preserve order and secure the comfort of the soldiers.'<sup>3</sup> Gordon's account certainly prioritised discipline; yet he also iterated how officers cared for their men, suggesting a softer approach to leadership.

Scholarship on the relationship between British officers and rankers during the eighteenth century has traditionally focused on the social disparity between officers and rankers, and the coerciveness of military discipline. Junior officers were drawn from across the gentlemanly classes, and were socially remote from the rank and file, the majority of whom were drawn from the labouring classes.<sup>4</sup> The social distinction between officers and rankers has been frequently highlighted in studies of the eighteenth-century army, and has traditionally been seen as

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures, and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign, 1808-1809: The Journal of Captain Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars*, ed. H.C. Wylly (London, 1913), p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> For the social composition of the rank and file during the eighteenth-century, and during the Napoleonic period, see Arthur Gilbert, 'An Analysis of some Eighteenth-Century Army Recruiting Records', *Journal of Army Historical Research*, 54 (1976), pp. 38-47; Edward J. Coss, *All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Norman, OK, 2010), pp. 67-72.

imbuing officers with an indifference towards their men.<sup>5</sup> In his study of desertion from the eighteenth-century army, Arthur Gilbert portrayed army discipline as overbearing and constrictive, as officers relied on corporal punishment to keep men in the ranks.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Edward J. Coss viewed military leadership as offering 'the stick without a carrot', and further emphasised officers' preference for corporal punishment as a way of maintaining discipline.<sup>7</sup> Recent scholarship, however, has revised the view of officer-soldier relations in the eighteenth century British army. Sylvia Frey has highlighted how British officers during the American War of Independence were generally reluctant to use corporal punishment to maintain order, preferring to inculcate the values of honour and duty to motivate troops.<sup>8</sup> John Cookson argued that military authority was contingent on the successful maintenance of reciprocal relationships.<sup>9</sup> In an important essay, William P. Tatum highlighted soldiers' agency in protesting against grievances, which resulted in officers exercising 'negotiated authority' over the rank and file.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter is about British junior officers' attitudes towards the men they commanded, and the factors that shaped their identities as leaders, both on and off the battlefield. Public attitudes towards common soldiers were evolving during the late-eighteenth century. The cultures of sensibility and Romanticism encouraged the view of soldiers as individuals, while artworks and literature were beginning to portray soldiers as objects of sympathy.<sup>11</sup> This evolution was reflected in the training of armies, particularly in light infantry regiments, which were trained to make use of soldiers' intuition.<sup>12</sup> The effects of this evolving view of common soldiers are evident in junior officers' identities as leaders. The changes brought by these evolving attitudes present a challenge to the traditional view of leadership within the army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Junior officers certainly expected deference from their

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth-Century British Army', *Armed Forces and Society*, 6 (1980), p. 554; Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 123-5; Roger Norman Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies: Society and the Military in the Revolutionary Age* (Gainesville, FL, 1998), p. 333.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, 'Why Men Deserted', pp. 553-7.

<sup>7</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 135-45. Also see Buckley, *The British Army in the West Indies*, pp. 235-7.

<sup>8</sup> Sylvia R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin TX, 1981), pp. 122-9.

<sup>9</sup> John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 29-35.

<sup>10</sup> William P. Tatum, 'The Soldiers Murmured Much on Account of this Usage': Military Justice and Negotiated Authority in the Eighteenth-Century British Army', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. Matthew McCormack and Kevin Linch (Liverpool, 2014), pp. 95-113.

<sup>11</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 127-96; Philip Shaw, 'Wars of Seeing: Suffering and Sentiment in Joseph Wright's *The Dead Soldier*', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, ed. Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 78-81.

<sup>12</sup> David Gates, *The British Light Infantry Arm, 1790-1815* (London, 1987), pp. 29-35.

men, and were not wholly averse to the use of corporal punishment to ensure order, yet they also aimed to build an understanding of the men under their command and were not immune to the suffering of soldiers. British junior officers' leadership style, therefore, may best be described as a form of paternalism. This style of leadership fused established patterns of leadership, such as aristocratic martial codes, with emerging views over the humanity of common soldiers. The first section of this chapter explores how junior officers' attitudes towards the rank and file were affected by evolving public perceptions of common soldiers; and how, as polite 'men of feeling', junior officers sympathised with their men during periods of suffering. The second section reveals how a belief in the humanity of the rank and file shaped junior officers' conduct as they sought to establish a familiarity with rankers, and to alleviate hardship where possible. The third section addresses the matter of discipline. Here, the greatest conflicts in junior officers' identities as leaders can be seen, as arguments over corporal punishment highlight how junior officers saw two sides of rankers' character. The fourth section explores junior officers' conduct in battle, where the values of 'natural' leadership, such as bravery and honour, were vital. Delivered with a moral high-handedness, which could range from benign displays of care, to a harsh acceptance of corporal punishment, leadership as practiced by British junior officers was grounded in the assumed social and moral superiority of the officer corps.

### ***A 'Parcel of Devils'?***

Lieutenant William Grattan of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot, or Connaught Rangers, held somewhat conflicting views of the rank and file of his regiment. An Irish Protestant officer in charge of predominantly Irish Catholic soldiers, Grattan acknowledged his soldiers' propensity for theft and destruction of property, yet nevertheless found his charges' wit and humours endearing. In his memoir, Grattan summed up his views on his soldiers: 'I cannot bring myself to think them, as many did, a parcel of devils, neither will I by any means try to pass them off for so many saints!'<sup>13</sup> The popular image of the British redcoat during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars has not been a positive one. Coss has persuasively argued that perceptions of the British soldiers during this period have been negatively skewed by derogative remarks made by British officers, most notably Wellington's early-nineteenth description of his soldiers as: 'the scum of the earth', which allowed subsequent historians to portray British soldiers as criminals or brutes.<sup>14</sup> The extent to which junior officers saw their soldiers in this light is debatable. Cookson has argued that Wellington's views reflected the majority view of officers, who saw soldiers as

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<sup>13</sup> William Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers, from 1808 to 1814*, Vol. I (London, 1847), p. 173.

<sup>14</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 29-42.

belonging to a 'culture of the poor'.<sup>15</sup> Junior officers certainly saw themselves as socially and culturally different from the rank and file; however, it does not follow that officers saw rankers as a homogenous collective of brutes or savages. Anecdotal evidence suggests that junior officers' perceptions of their men were not fixed, and officers could recognise soldiers' admirable qualities.

Officers and rankers were drawn from unequal social backgrounds, yet birth and wealth were not the only distinctions between officers and rankers. Officers emphasised the cultural differences between themselves and their men to explain and buttress their authority. The rank and file's vulgarity was a source of disgust for officers. Ensign George Hennell wrote to his brothers about the behaviour of his men before a battle:

The conversation among the men is interspersed with the most horrid oaths declaring what they will do with the fellow they lay hands on. What they intend to get in plunder, hoping they will stand a chance that they may split two at once. Then someone more expert at low wit than his companions draws a ludicrous picture of a Frenchman with a bayonet stuck in him or something of the kind, which raises a loud and general laugh. Others describe what they have achieved in this way ... They marched off ... & for amusement by the way commenced their wit upon each other with grossness and sometimes [in] point hardly to be exceeded.<sup>16</sup>

The British army in the Peninsula were involved in storming the fortresses of Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo, and San Sebastian, with Badajoz and San Sebastian accompanied by subsequent violence, rape, and destruction that Charles Esdaile has described as a 'war crime'.<sup>17</sup> British officers' views of their men's conduct after the storming of fortresses in the Peninsula highlight how junior officers could see their men not just as vulgar, but as savage. Robert Blakeney of the 28<sup>th</sup> foot described the behaviour of soldiers after the 1812 storming of Badajoz: 'every species of outrage was publicly committed in the houses, churches and streets, and in a manner so brutal that a faithful recital would be too indecent and too shocking to humanity.'<sup>18</sup>

Even here, however, British officers' views of their men were pockmarked with ambiguity. The storming of breaches was horrific: 3, 500 British soldiers died during the Siege of Badajoz

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<sup>15</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 28 Oct. 1812, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War*, ed. Michael Glover (London, 1979), pp. 54-5.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London, 2003), p. 470.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures, and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment, An Autobiography*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), p. 274.

alone.<sup>19</sup> Officers acknowledged soldiers for their bravery. Captain Henry Ross-Lewin of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Foot was at a loss to explain the behaviour of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot in the looting following the siege of Badajoz, and emphasised the duality of soldiers' characters: 'It is painful to contemplate so rapid an alteration of light and shade in the soldier's character! To behold him one hour a hero and the next a brute.'<sup>20</sup> While condemning soldiers' conduct after a siege, junior officers excused the violence and plunder of their troops on the grounds that they were acting within established rules of war surrounding sieges. In the case of a siege, it was accepted that the defenders could surrender once a breach was made in the defences, and be allowed to leave the fortress peacefully, or decide to fight on, on the understanding that the attackers did not owe the inhabitants any grace if they were victorious.<sup>21</sup> Junior officers appear to have accepted this practice, which resulted in the view that soldiers' conduct after sieges was unpalatable, but legitimate. Describing the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, Captain Jonathan Leach of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles conceded that: 'When a town is stormed, it is inevitable that excesses will be, as they ever have been, committed by the assailants, more particularly if it takes place at night.'<sup>22</sup> Shocked at the plunder of the troops at Badajoz, Hennell stopped short of accusing his men of murdering the town's inhabitants. In a letter to a friend, Hennell noted they would have been within their rights to do so: 'I hear our soldiers in some instances behaved very ill-I only saw two [behaving ill] and stopped them both ... By the laws of war we are allowed to kill all found in a town that stands a storm and our soldiers declared they would do so, but an Englishman cannot kill in cold blood.'<sup>23</sup>

One key difference officers saw between themselves and their men was a differing degree of humanity, often expressed in terms of contrasting levels of sensibility. The late-eighteenth century culture of sensibility made a virtue of feeling and sensation, as polite men and women responded to moving stimuli with emotional responses, such as tears.<sup>24</sup> As shown by G.J. Barker-Benfield, sensibility was seen as an acquirable attribute through exposure to stimuli, such as literature or music, but was also used to reinforce established hierarchies, with the degree of sensibility displayed by an individual seen to underline social standing.<sup>25</sup> As shown by Catriona Kennedy and Sarah Knott, late-Georgian officers used the language of sensibility to distinguish

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<sup>19</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 217.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Ross-Lewin *With the 'Thirty-Second' in the Peninsula and Other Campaigns* (Dublin 1904), p. 166.

<sup>21</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 212-3.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), p. 250.

<sup>23</sup> Volunteer George Hennell, 16 Apr. 1812, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, 2000), pp. 281-319; G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, IL, 1992), pp. 247-50; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 90-6.

<sup>25</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, p. 8-9.

themselves from the 'coarseness' of common soldiers.<sup>26</sup> Captain John Blakiston, recalled his astonishment at the seeming obliviousness of his men before the 1813 storming of San Sebastian:

[I] could not help observing, with some degree of astonishment, that, with a very few exceptions, they were all, even the headmost (who were, in fact, a forlorn hope), in a profound sleep. Now many of these men would probably the next morning betray considerable fear, and some would perhaps behave like rank cowards, for all are not brave. Whence, then, this insensibility to their situation?<sup>27</sup>

Attempting to explain the brutishness of their men, officers looked to the cultural background of rankers. Captain George Wood of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot noted in his memoir that officers and soldiers bore adversity differently, owing to their different constitutions: 'the men of course [were] more burdened, but then they are from infancy more inured to hardships and proportionably better able to bear the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigues and privations incident to war.'<sup>28</sup>

Reflecting the assumption that personal character was the product of experience, junior officers also noted the potentially brutalising effects of war on the rank and file. Following the 1812 siege of Badajoz, Captain John Kincaid of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles came across two soldiers who had both lost a leg in the storming of the breach, only to be ignored by their comrades. Astonished at the callousness of their comrades, Kincaid remarked: 'It is wonderful how such scenes as these will deaden men's feelings, and with that apathy it enables them, to look upon the suffering of their fellow creatures!'<sup>29</sup> During the harrowing 1812 retreat from Burgos, staff officer Captain Thomas Henry Browne reflected on the effects that the warfare had on men and officers:

it was about this time that I began to remark the different effects of continued warfare like that of the Peninsula on the character of the officers & common soldiers. The latter appeared to me, to become daily more ferocious & less fit to return to the duties of citizens...The officers on the contrary seemed to become

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<sup>26</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 80-1; Sarah Knott, 'Sensibility and the American War for Independence', *The American Historical Review*, 109 (2004), pp. 29-32.

<sup>27</sup> John Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe*, Vol. II (London, 1829), p. 250.

<sup>28</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> John Kincaid, *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade, in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands, from 1809 to 1815* (London, 1830), p. 139.



more thoughtful & humane & more anxious to exert themselves in softening the misery with which they were surrounded.<sup>30</sup>

In junior officer accounts, there is an evident hierarchy of feeling they employed to distinguish themselves from the rank and file: by emphasising their capacity to feel, junior officers affirmed their own moral and social superiority over the rank and file.<sup>31</sup>

The characteristics that officers used to distinguish themselves from their men, however, also allowed for an appreciation of rankers' humanity. Suffering was a feature of soldiers' accounts of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, particularly in memoirs of the Peninsular War. As revealed by Neil Ramsey, soldier memoirists recounted their personal experiences of suffering in an appeal to early-nineteenth century reading tastes, and cultivated a 'shared sympathy' between author and reader.<sup>32</sup> Gavin Daly has highlighted how British soldiers in the Peninsula weaved accounts of suffering into their narratives, as part of their identities as 'romantic travellers'.<sup>33</sup> Suffering was central to junior officers' military identities, as it fed into a wider narrative of subordination and obscurity. Aside from detailing their own suffering, junior officers were witnesses to the suffering of others, including the rank and file. Being attuned to the suffering of others was a feature of late-eighteenth century cultures of sensibility and sentimentalism, and was employed in humanitarian campaigns, such as the abolition movement.<sup>34</sup> Public perceptions of common soldiers were also touched by this culture, which created the potential for soldiers to be seen as an object of sympathy. As shown by Philip Shaw, artistic representations of military suffering began to address the suffering of common soldiers during the late-eighteenth century, and cut across topics of wounding, grieving, and loss.<sup>35</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that junior officers' perceptions of their men were influenced by the evolving perception of common soldiers. These sentiments are most strongly presented in memoirs, suggesting that officer memoirists were stressing their own humanity to a reading audience who were increasingly sympathising with soldiers. There are sufficient references to common soldiers' suffering in contemporary accounts, however, to suggest that these ideas were not the preserve of the post-war period. Junior officers often expressed their sympathy for soldiers who were experiencing suffering on campaign. After a march on a bad road in torrential rain in the Peninsula to the point where he was 'completely knocked up', Lieutenant James Hope

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), p. 198.

<sup>31</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>32</sup> Neil Ramsey, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780-1835* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 38-40.

<sup>33</sup> Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 81-6.

<sup>34</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, p. 224.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Shaw, 'Dead Soldiers: Suffering in British Military Art, 1783-1789', *Romanticism*, 11 (2005), pp. 55-69.

of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foot noted to a friend how his own hardship paled in comparison to that of rankers: 'When this was my situation, who had neither musket, knapsack, canteen, or haversack, what must the poor soldier have suffered, who had to march encumbered with all these - a weight a little under three stone?'<sup>36</sup> Junior officers stressed their proximity to the rank and file as giving them a unique perspective of their hardship. Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards wrote to his mother about Wellington's policy in the Peninsula of marching the men into villages during the day, and then into bivouac again in the evening: 'God knows we have had marching enough by day and night and have not grumbled, but added to all this to be unnecessarily and experimentally harassed is heartbreaking...Himself and the General Officers not feeling them [the men], are not as well aware of them as we are.'<sup>37</sup> Blakiston recalled a 25 mile long march in the heat of the Peninsula:

On such occasions the situation of an officer commanding a company is worse than that of a slave-driver. To have to urge the men beyond their strength, and to be obliged to turn a deaf ear to their entreaties to be allowed to fall out, until the poor wretches sink from exhaustion, or are pronounced incapable of proceeding by the surgeon, was by far the most disagreeable duty that fell to my lot. The General commanding the Division may censure the Brigadier, the Brigadier may find fault with the Commander of Battalions, and the last may rate the Captains for the number of men left behind on the march, without any great expense of feeling; but to the latter officer, who comes in immediate contact with the soldiers whose sufferings he witnesses it is really heart-rending.<sup>38</sup>

By highlighting his own distress at having to force his men to march on through tough conditions, Blakiston portrayed himself as an object of sympathy; however, his account also reveals his sympathy for the men he commanded, suggesting that he viewed his men as thinking, feeling beings. Furthermore, Blakiston emphasised his own proximity to these events, indicating that junior officers felt themselves more exposed to their men's suffering than superior officers.

By expressing sympathy in this manner, junior officers were certainly affirming their own identities as polite 'men of feeling', but viewing their men as objects of sympathy also allowed for a broader recognition of their qualities and character. In contrast to the view of soldiers as

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<sup>36</sup> Lieutenant James Hope, 11 Jan. 1812, in James Hope, *Letters from Portugal, Spain and France during the Memorable Campaigns of 1811. 1812 and 1813; and from Belgium and France in the Year 1815, By a British Officer* (Edinburgh, 1819), p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Ensign John Mills, 2 Aug. 1812, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), pp. 187-8.

<sup>38</sup> Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, pp. 185-6.

callous, some officers also noted the humanity of the rank and file. Captain John Harley, the quartermaster of the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment, applauded his men's conduct on the retreat from Burgos. Harley witnessed his men as they attended to the officers' mess cook, who had just given birth to twins: 'As the regiment had no tents, this poor creature was obliged to lie under a tree; the soldiers indeed, like men, taking off their coats to cover her.'<sup>39</sup> Suffering was not purely observed as a brutalising force, as some officers saw their men caring for each other. Lieutenant Moyle Sherer of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot described his men as, 'charitable and generous', and suggested that: 'frequent exposure to hardship, privation, and danger, make them friendly and ready to assist each other.'<sup>40</sup> The manner in which rankers bore their sufferings engendered a degree of respect from officers. In this regard, junior officers reflected the values of the cultures of politeness and sensibility. As noted by Philip Carter, people who faced suffering with resolve or cheerfulness were viewed with more compassion than those who languished.<sup>41</sup> Blakiston applauded the ability of soldiers to remain cheerful on long marches in the Peninsula: 'The troops were ... a good deal fatigued, and began to evince the usual consequences of a long march in worn out shoes and sore feet; but notwithstanding this and the privation they had undergone in the scarcity of provisions, they were in high spirits.'<sup>42</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep wrote home to his mother from the Peninsula in 1812, applauding the behaviour of his troops on a march in the heat of summer: 'Discipline was easily preserved for the conduct of the soldiers was exceedingly praiseworthy. Burdened as they were with the heavy loads they had to carry, some poor fellows were often deplorably jaded, but cheerful and uncomplaining.'<sup>43</sup> Junior officers, therefore, maintained two seemingly contradictory views of the rank and file. On the one hand, they could see common soldiers as coarse and brutish, and lacking in feeling. On the other, they expressed a deal of sympathy for their men's plight in undergoing suffering. These conflicting attitudes manifested themselves in a paternalistic style of leadership, which stressed the social and moral superiority of officers, yet also grounded their leadership in the principles of benevolence and care.

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<sup>39</sup> John Harley, *The Veteran, or Forty Years in the British Service: Comprising Adventures in Egypt, Spain Portugal, Belgium, Holland and Prussia*, Vol. II (London, 1838), p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> Moyle Sherer, *Recollections of the Peninsula* (London, 1825), p. 181.

<sup>41</sup> Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, p. 103.

<sup>42</sup> Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, p. 201.

<sup>43</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 22 Jun. 1812, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsula*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Spellmount, 1997), p. 144.

### ***Officer-Soldier Relations***

Much of the scholarship on relationships between eighteenth-century British officers and soldiers has focused on the social and ideological barriers that were erected between the two groups. Coss highlighted the lack of recognition officers paid to rankers in their accounts to suggest that the officer corps had a 'disinterestedness' in their men, owing to the social gulf between the two groups.<sup>44</sup> The social divide certainly inhibited the formation of close, personal bonds between officers and soldiers. Few officers, only five-and-a-half per cent during the Peninsular War, had been commissioned from the ranks.<sup>45</sup> In addition to structural barriers, the officer corps also displayed cultural obstacles to interaction between officers and soldiers. As highlighted by Arthur Gilbert, the officer corps' honour code produced a culture in which associating too closely with rankers could result in an officer being ostracised, or court martialled.<sup>46</sup> This culture which emphasised a degree of distance from the ranks persisted into the Napoleonic Period, with the logic that overfamiliarity would jeopardise the deference soldiers owed their officers as social superiors. As 'gentlemen', junior officers expected their men to respect their social standing, and to emulate their example. Ensign John Rous of the Coldstream Guards wrote to his father: 'Gen. Paget has joined us, and is universally liked by the officers and must soon be so by the rest of the men, since whatever is liked by the former is always so by the latter, at least in regiments like the Guards.'<sup>47</sup> The aristocratic culture of elite regiments such as the Coldstream Guards likely reinforced the culture of deference; however, a similar emphasis on the social authority of officers can be seen in less celebrated line regiments. Grattan advocated a degree of separation between officers and soldiers, and described the leadership style of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot: 'We approached their [the soldiers'] quarters as seldom as we possibly could - I mean as seldom as was necessary - and thereby kept up that distance between officers and privates so essential to discipline.'<sup>48</sup>

Maintaining a respectable distance between officers and soldiers was certainly a feature of the leadership style of junior officers, yet this is not to suggest that junior officers saw their authority as the straightforward imposition of rank or class power. Recent scholarship has revealed the complex relationships that characterised eighteenth-century officer-soldier relations. Tatum has demonstrated how soldiers were not passive members of the regimental

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<sup>44</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 125.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Glover, 'Purchase, Patronage and Promotion in the Army at the Time of the Peninsular War', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, 2 (1973), p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Law and Honour among Eighteenth-Century British Army Officers', *The Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), p. 86.

<sup>47</sup> Ensign John Rous, 1 Nov. 1812, in John Rous, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula: The Peninsula War Letters of John Rous, Coldstream Guards, 1812-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), pp. 38-9.

<sup>48</sup> William Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers, from 1808 to 1814*, Vol. I (London, 1847), p. 174.

hierarchy, as they variously protested against, complied with, or negotiated the terms of military authority.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Cookson has highlighted the vertical and horizontal bonds that characterised inter-regimental relations.<sup>50</sup> Maintaining these relationships with the rank and file evidently required an understanding between officers and soldiers of their expectations and rights. Officers cultivated vertical bonds with their men and saw a shared regimental interest, trust and, at the least, a basic understanding of character between officers and men as essential to maintaining discipline and authority. Advice literature emphasised the importance of this relationship. The *Regimental Companion* saw familiarity as essential in maintaining order in battle, and instructed infantry officers:

to make every soldier in his company so thoroughly acquainted with his word of command, that in the midst of smoke, noise, and even under circumstances of momentary confusion, *his* voice should always be the principal and governing impulse of the company's movement. On this account, officers should be shifted as little as possible from the different companies to which they have been originally attached.<sup>51</sup>

The *Companion* advised cavalry officers further: 'Every subaltern officer ought, as soon as possible, to get acquainted with the names and characters of the men of the troop he belongs to.'<sup>52</sup>

Junior officers noted that it was easier to command men who they were familiar with. Officers who found themselves in charge of soldiers from assorted regiments routinely complained about the difficulty of maintaining control. Marching a detachment of reinforcements to the front in the Peninsula, Captain Charles Ramus Forrest of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot recorded his arrival: 'The men of the detachment were immediately drafted off to companies & thus ended my command, a duty from which I was most happy to be relieved and one on which I had met with much trouble and anxiety.'<sup>53</sup> Captain Alexander Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars expressed similar sentiments during the 1809 retreat to Corunna:

I have seldom experienced greater satisfaction than I felt on transferring the men of my detachment to their respective regiments. I had been heartily sick of my command from the commencement of the march, for, although the conduct of the

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<sup>49</sup> Tatum, "The Soldiers Murmured Much on Account of this Usage", pp. 95-113.

<sup>50</sup> Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds', pp. 24-7.

<sup>51</sup> Charles James, *The Regimental Companion: Containing the Relative Duties of Every Officer in the British Army*, Vol. I (London, 1800), p. 155.

<sup>52</sup> James, *The Regimental Companion*, p. 100.

<sup>53</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 2001-03-60, Charles Ramus Forrest, diary, 20 Apr. 1812.

individuals of my own regiment was most exemplary, nothing could exceed the insubordination of the rest.<sup>54</sup>

In battle, the importance of familiarity was amplified. Recalling his time as a ranker with the 56<sup>th</sup> Foot, William Surtees attributed the failure of the 1809 expedition to Walcheren on the lack of understanding between men and officers, as the army had been assembled from militia drafts:

the officers of course neither had that knowledge of the characters of their men, which is so essential, nor had the latter confidence in their officers, which only service together for some length of time can engender, and which is absolutely necessary to secure an unreserved and active obedience to their commands.<sup>55</sup>

Lieutenant William Tomkinson of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons wrote in his diary after the Siege of Badajoz: 'The detachment to the gorge was chiefly from the 88<sup>th</sup> regiment. Men in detachment do not know their officers, nor officers their men. There can be no regimental *esprit* ... and when men are not known by officers, they may do anything with impunity.'<sup>56</sup>

As officer accounts only occasionally refer to individual soldiers, the nature of relationships built between officers and soldiers are difficult to reconstruct. It is likely that hours spent on the drill ground bred familiarity. As highlighted by Rory Muir, drill was not only important for battlefield efficacy, but was also critical in fostering regimental morale.<sup>57</sup> Coss highlighted how drill built soldiers' confidence in their officers, as long as drill was executed competently.<sup>58</sup> Growing professional standards in the British army saw officers required to be competent at putting their men through drill, however, drill also necessitated interaction between men and officers beyond the giving of orders. John Cooke, a subaltern with the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot, noted that new officers were required to learn drill alongside rankers, recalling that an: 'officer was not considered clear of the adjutant until he could put a company through the evolutions by word of command, which he had practised in the ranks. It generally took him six months in summer at four times a day, an hour at each period, to perfect all he had to learn.'<sup>59</sup> Ensign William Bell of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot wrote home about his routine as a new ensign: 'I have been out at six o'clock in the

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<sup>54</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign*, p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> William Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years in the Rifle Brigade* (London, 1833), p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer in the Peninsular War and Waterloo Campaign, 1809-1815*, ed. James Tomkinson (London, 1895), p. 143.

<sup>57</sup> Rory Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon* (New Haven, CT, 1998), p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 166.

<sup>59</sup> John Cooke, *A True Soldier Gentleman: The Memoirs of Lt. John Cooke, 1791-1813*, ed. Eileen Hathaway (Swanage, 2000), p. 49.

mornings for some time past – since I joined the regiment. We are drilled with the men exactly the same as the privates.’<sup>60</sup>

Benevolence on the part of officers was a crucial feature of officer-soldier relations. Junior officers sought to earn their men’s respect through acts of care and kindness. Cookson argued that the social stratification of officers and soldiers imbued officers with a substantial degree of moral responsibility to act generously towards their men.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, junior officers were a part of an institution with established practices of care. Erica Charters has revealed how Britain acted as a ‘caring fiscal-military state’ during the Seven Years’ War. Charters demonstrated how the military valued cleanliness, order, and disease prevention; and attended to the health and well-being of common soldiers and sailors.<sup>62</sup> These values are reflected in the way junior officers treated their men. The figure of the caring subaltern or captain is a staple of junior officer accounts, as many officers allowed minor breaches in discipline to ease the lot of soldiers, or attempted to alleviate suffering where possible. The appalling conditions which accompanied marches or retreats in the Peninsula often compelled officers to attend to their men. Keep wrote home to his mother from the Peninsula: ‘Both Nelson and I had been much under ... censure in the early part of our journey for letting the men help themselves to oranges growing unprotected on the road ... Nelson shed tears of vexation at our misfortune, though I cared little about it, the poor soldiers being often so distressed with thirst.’<sup>63</sup> Officers could take a more active role in supporting their men. During the 1812 retreat from Burgos, Second Captain William Webber of the Royal Artillery took what steps he could to ensure men did not fall behind: ‘Those men who were weak or sickly were fast dropping in the rear, certain of falling into the hands of the enemy unless we would mount them on our carriages, which feelings of humanity in opposition to a sense of duty almost tempted us to do as far as we could - but from the numbers of our sick, we only brought on three.’<sup>64</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards described the retreat to his father: ‘I have seen sick soldiers rolled up in their blankets, lying by the roadside, left for want of conveyance, perhaps to die ... I had one from my own company *left to his fate (having lost the use of his limbs in the retreat)* and after exhausting

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<sup>60</sup> Ensign William Bell, quoted in *The Napoleonic War Journal of Captain Thomas Henry Browne, 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> Cookson, ‘Regimental Worlds’, p. 35.

<sup>62</sup> Erica Charters, ‘The Caring Fiscal-Military State during the Seven Years War, 1756-1763’, *The Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 921-41.

<sup>63</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep 9 Jan. 1813, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 123.

<sup>64</sup> Second Captain William Webber, 15 Nov. 1812, in William Webber, *With the Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsular War Journal of 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery*, ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe (London, 1991), p. 114.

my own means, by carrying on my private mules another in the same state.'<sup>65</sup> The sympathy junior officers displayed towards soldiers can, at times, appear to be more about affirming their moral and cultural superiority. There is certainly an element of that in officer accounts; however, as noted by Barker-Benfield, sentimental culture was attuned to this criticism, and stressed the importance of acting humanely towards objects of sympathy.<sup>66</sup> Sympathy for soldiers and attempts to alleviate suffering are linked in officer accounts, suggesting that junior officers' saw an important tangible dimension to their identities as 'men of feeling.'

Shared campaign experiences also had the effect of dissolving the barriers between officers and soldiers. Second Lieutenant George Simmons of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles appeared to have a greater understanding of his soldiers by sharing in their hardship. Simmons wrote to his parents:

Even the strongest in outward appearance would lie down, or rather fall down, and say positively they could not go any farther. The officers of our regiment – most of them rode on horses or mules – did not experience the fatigues so materially. As I had no money to spare, I was obliged to walk, and, God knows, if illness had intervened or I had not been able to march, my case would have been dismal.<sup>67</sup>

In particular, the chaos and suffering which attended retreats in the Peninsula saw the distinction between officers and soldiers break down. The 1809 retreat to Corunna, and the 1812 retreat from Burgos, saw the army fighting against brutal winter conditions and the pursuing French army, while short on transport and supplies, often going days without adequate shelter.<sup>68</sup> Suffering on these retreats was shared between officers and soldiers alike, as a shortage of supplies forced officers to eat acorns found in the forest or to turn to plunder. In a letter to his father, Aitchison described the retreat from Burgos: 'We slept on the bare *wet* ground for 6 nights following the middle of November (sometimes after marching from daybreak til dark) and in that time there was but one night and one day without rain or hail.'<sup>69</sup> In terms of human suffering, however, nothing compared to the retreat to Corunna. Gordon noted of the retreat to Corunna: 'The miseries to which the troops were exposed increased at every step ... Many of the officers were destitute of shoes or stockings, with their clothes in rags;

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<sup>65</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 19 Nov. 1812, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K. Thompson (London, 1981), p. 219.

<sup>66</sup> Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, pp. 224-6.

<sup>67</sup> Second Lieutenant George Simmons, unknown date in Sep. 1809, in George Simmons, *A British Rifleman: Journals and Correspondence during the Peninsular War and the Campaign of Wellington*, ed. Willoughby Verner (London, 1986), pp. 30-1.

<sup>68</sup> For a survey of the retreats, Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* (Oxford, 1902, 1922), Vol. I, pp. 559-82, Vol. VI, pp. 55-86, 143-56.

<sup>69</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 10 Dec. 1812, in Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p. 219.



it may, therefore, be imagined that the privates were in a most deplorable condition.'<sup>70</sup> The extremity of such conditions had a levelling effect. Gordon wrote in his journal of a night on the retreat: 'I felt thankful at being able to obtain a share of some wet straw in the narrow loft of a miserable hovel, which was occupied by at least a dozen persons- officers, soldiers and servants- all distinction of ranks being levelled by the distress and danger to which all were exposed.'<sup>71</sup>

The more mundane routine of attending to men's cleanliness also drew attention from junior officers. Sickness was a constant issue for the British army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Soldiers in the West Indies were particularly vulnerable to disease: Michael Duffy calculated that 43,750 soldiers and non-commissioned officers who served in the West Indies between 1793 and 1801 died from disease, at a rate of nearly 51 per cent.<sup>72</sup> Expeditions in other climes were less severely impacted by disease, yet sickness was still a concern. Ten per cent of soldiers on the 1809 Walcheren expedition died from 'Walcheren Fever'; while the British army in the Peninsula suffered 55,000 disease related deaths in the period 1810-1814.<sup>73</sup> Junior officer accounts suggest that they were concerned about the effects campaign conditions had on rankers' health, and feature regular observations on the general health of the army. Serving in the Peninsula, Webber wrote in his diary during the summer of 1813: 'Our army was never more healthy, indeed I should think troops in England cannot be in a better state.'<sup>74</sup> Webber applauded the improvements made to the army's organisation in this case, particularly in the wake of the disastrous retreat from Burgos:

The soldiers have tents and although they are much crowded ... the nights are sufficiently cool to prevent their feeling any ill effects ... During the last campaign they had none and it was very trying to the strongest constitution to lie down, after a long march, exposed to the mists or dampness of the night air. It is a pleasure to be in an army so well regulated as this, in which the wants of the soldiers are so much considered.<sup>75</sup>

Junior officers not only saw the value in improved regulations, they also actively sought to keep their men clean. The confined spaces of transport ships were an area of concern for officers. On board a transport ship for the West Indies with his regiment, Captain Thomas Powell of the 14<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign*, p. 190.

<sup>71</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign*, p. 176.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 328-9.

<sup>73</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 85-6; Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>74</sup> Second Captain William Webber, 14 Jun. 1813, in Webber, *With the Guns in the Peninsula*, p. 167.

<sup>75</sup> Second Captain William Webber, 14 Jun. 1813, in Webber, *With the Guns in the Peninsula*, p. 167.

Foot and his fellow officers instituted a rigorous regime of cleanliness to ensure that sickness did not take hold. Soldiers and their families were kept on the upper deck during the day; the sleeping decks were washed daily, and then fumigated five days a week. In addition, each soldier bathed three times a week; was provided with two clean shirts a week; and were paraded twice a day to ensure that their hands and faces were clean.<sup>76</sup> Powell further recommended: 'The men should often parade without their shoes and stockings, to see if they keep their Feet Clean.'<sup>77</sup> Lieutenant Peter Bowlby of the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot was not impressed with the conditions of one ship bound for the West Indies: 'I found the transport very dirty, to occupy myself I obtained permission from the Captain of my regiment who commanded on board to set to work cleaning the ship; which was effectually done.'<sup>78</sup>

Being over-zealous in attending to the rank and file was often perceived by junior officers as creating an extra burden for soldiers, which in turn would limit the respect they afforded to officers. A relaxed air to discipline was seen to imply trust in the rank and file. Keep wrote to his mother, describing how his captain undermined his own authority by subjecting his men to unnecessary discipline:

Our captain in command ... [would] trouble the men by a thorough examination of their packs, often when tired and falling asleep ... The men's packs, lest they should have disposed of any of their wardrobe for liquor on the march, are thus required to be looked into ... it was an unnecessary annoyance to all parties, particularly the suspicion of it to good soldiers who had no intention of the kind, and he was very unpopular with them.<sup>79</sup>

Evidently, junior officers were not only interested in the physical well-being of their men, but also in their morale. Garrisoned in Halifax in North America in 1807, Browne found himself stationed in a battery as the sole officer in charge of fifty men for a period of several months. This situation presented Browne with something of a dilemma. As the only officer in the station, and with little prospect of activity outside the daily routine of drill, Browne could have had considerable difficulty exerting control over his men. Instead of subjecting his men to a routine, however, or maintaining order through fear of corporal punishment, Browne chose to establish a working arrangement with his men to keep their morale intact. A keen fisherman, Browne crewed a small boat with soldiers, and caught food for his men: 'I bought fishing lines, and used

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<sup>76</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Thomas Powell, 'Diary of Captain Thomas Powell', pp. 43-4.

<sup>77</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Powell, 'Diary of Captain Thomas Powell', pp. 43-4.

<sup>78</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Peter Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Bowlby', p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 9 Jan. 1813, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 122.

to occupy myself and the crew of my boat in fishing for my little garrison – we caught fish in the greatest abundance, and the men were capitally supplied with it.’<sup>80</sup>

Browne took other measures which featured a greater involvement from his men, as he put his soldiers to work. He ordered two acres of land be cleared by his soldiers so they could grow potatoes, and also devised a novel way of alleviating boredom:

The barracks in which we lived was on a bare rocky bit of ground, and it occurred to me that I would make a garden to it. For this purpose, instead of having parade with my men, I used to order them on fatigue for about an hour each day, and as I had masons and all other sorts of trades in the company, the rough stones all about the place soon assumed the shape of a regular garden wall.<sup>81</sup>

Far from lacking understanding of his men, Browne was familiar enough to recognise that his soldiers possessed skills which could be put to meaningful ends. His soldiers appear to have appreciated this diversion, as Browne reported in his diary: ‘The men took a hearty and good humoured interest in this little improvement, and before two months were over, I had the satisfaction of seeing a remarkably pretty garden added to the Eastern battery.’<sup>82</sup>

Nor were officer-soldier relationships one-way. Officer accounts occasionally highlight the affection rankers could hold for officers, suggesting that caring or brave officers were admired by their men. During preparations for the Walcheren campaign, Ensign William Thornton Keep turned to his men for advice on what gear he should take abroad: ‘I shall provide myself with half a dozen shirts only, 1 pair of boots, pantaloons and a great coat, 4 pairs of cotton stockings and three of worsted. I bought these by the advice of old soldiers who vouch for the benefit I shall derive from them with wet feet.’<sup>83</sup> Rankers could also demonstrate their appreciation to popular officers. After the 1813 Battle of Vitoria, Lieutenant George Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars received a present for attempting to prevent another officer, Carew, from being captured by the French: ‘Capt. Carew’s troop presented me yesterday with a most beautiful poodle dog, that they took at Vitoria, for my conduct with them at that glorious battle. It was a gift from the whole troop who had kept the dog amongst them since the victory.’<sup>84</sup> This was not an isolated occurrence. Lieutenant James Hope of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders wrote to a friend about a gift he received after the 1815 Battle of Quatre Bras: ‘I received a message from a wounded

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<sup>80</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 78.

<sup>81</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, pp. 78-9.

<sup>82</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 79.

<sup>83</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 27 Jun. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 15 Jul. 1813, ‘The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar in 1813’, p. 180.

soldier, named Robinson, begging me to speak to him, as he had in his possession a book which I would like to read. I complied with his request-received the book; and, on opening it, was truly astonished to find it the History of Scotland's champion, Sir William Wallace.'<sup>85</sup> Similarly, Ensign Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards returned to his company after the 1813 storming of San Sebastian to find his men relieved that he had survived. One ranker commented: 'why damn it sir, we thought you had been *kilt* upon that there breach; & real I be damned glad to see thee, that I be.'<sup>86</sup> The social distinction officers perceived between themselves and their men ensured that they expected their men to show the deference which befitted their social position; yet officer-soldier relations were more complex than the imposition of class authority. Junior officers saw maintaining a respectful relationship with their men, characterised by a degree of familiarity and understanding, as essential for maintaining authority. Importantly, junior officers aimed to cultivate this relationship by acting with benevolence towards their men, attending to their care and morale.

### ***Corporal Punishment***

There was, however, another side to discipline in the army. The threat of corporal punishment loomed large in the lives of common soldiers. Rankers could face beatings or floggings for offences such as being absent from duty or theft, and were subject to the death penalty for the more serious crimes of desertion, assault, murder, and striking an officer.<sup>87</sup> All but the most severe crimes were dealt with at the regimental level, effectively leaving discipline to the discretion of regiments.<sup>88</sup> The degree of corporal punishment within the late-eighteenth century British army has been a matter of significant scholarly debate. Coss argued that corporal punishment, in particular flogging, was so prevalent within the British army during the Napoleonic period that it was nearly an 'inevitable event' that soldiers would be flogged at some point.<sup>89</sup> Other historians have offered a more nuanced view of corporal punishment. Andrew Bamford has highlighted how the army rewarded commanding officers for avoiding corporal punishment in all but the most severe cases of indiscipline, and removed officers who were too

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<sup>85</sup> Lieutenant James Hope, 27 Jun. 1815, in Hope, *Letters from Portugal, Spain and France*, p. 276.

<sup>86</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 7 Sep. 1813, in Orlando Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War: The Letters of Captain the Honourable Orlando Bridgeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 140.

<sup>87</sup> For an outline of the practice of military discipline in the Peninsula, see Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 135-45.

<sup>88</sup> G.A. Steppler, 'British Military Law, Discipline, and the Conduct of Regimental Courts Martial in the Later Eighteenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), p. 862.

<sup>89</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, pp. 137-41.

willing to use flogging as a disciplinary measure.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, G.A. Stepler has highlighted how the scale of punishment varied much between regiments during the late-eighteenth century, owing to different regimental cultures.<sup>91</sup> Corporal punishment was just one disciplinary option employed by the British army. In studying the daily order books of the 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars in 1813, T.H. McGuffie found that infractions were routinely punished without the use of corporal punishment, with the regiment preferring to employ other methods, such as: reducing non-commissioned officers to privates; placing men on extra drill; and by ordering men to wear their jackets inside-out.<sup>92</sup> As highlighted by J.R. Dinwiddy, public attitudes towards flogging were becoming more critical of the practice by the start of the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> From 1800 onwards, the scale of flogging in the army was attracting the attention of reformers in the press and parliament, as well as some senior army officers, who hoped to reduce the number of floggings within the army to increase troop morale.<sup>94</sup>

The tensions between the established practice of flogging as a disciplinary tool, and the growing public condemnation of the practice, are evident in junior officers' accounts. Junior officers' attitudes ranged from the view that corporal punishment was a regrettable, but necessary tool in cases of ill-discipline; to outright condemnation of using the lash to maintain discipline. It is evident that many junior officers saw recourse to flogging as an appropriate and justified measure. After a shortage of food saw the troopers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons steal corn intended for the regiment's horses, Lieutenant William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons wrote to his father: 'in order to put a stop to such ravenous Appetites we have been under Necessity of flogging every Irishman and many twice or three Times over.'<sup>95</sup> Bragge's reference to Irishmen being the recipient of floggings may suggest a prejudiced view of Irish soldiers as particularly in need of corporal punishment to keep them in line, or a discriminatory view that Irish soldiers committed more crimes than their non-Irish comrades. Although most floggings took place after a court martial had passed judgement on a soldier, junior officers also meted out corporal punishment at their discretion. Junior officers who followed this course appear to have favoured the use or threat of violence in instances when they did not have established relationships with soldiers. To maintain control over his detachment of stragglers on the retreat to Corunna,

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<sup>90</sup> Andrew Bamford, *Sickness, Suffering, and the Sword: The British Regiment on Campaign, 1808-1815* (Norman, OK, 2013), pp. 64-72.

<sup>91</sup> Stepler, 'British Military Law', pp. 862-3.

<sup>92</sup> T.H. McGuffie, 'The Seventh Hussars in 1813: Duties of a Light Cavalry Regiment in London', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 46 (1968), p. 9.

<sup>93</sup> For the campaign against flogging, see J.R. Dinwiddy, 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign against Flogging in the Army', *The English Historical Review*, 97(1982), pp. 308-31.

<sup>94</sup> Dinwiddy, 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign against Flogging', pp. 310-2.

<sup>95</sup> Lieutenant William Bragge, 9 Jan. 1812, in William Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait, 1811-1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons*, ed. S.A.C. Cassels (New York, NY, 1963), p. 26.

Gordon was: 'on one occasion obliged to draw my sword on a private of the --- to enforce obedience to the order to turn out for a march.'<sup>96</sup> Placed in charge of a detachment of men en route to North America in 1812, Lieutenant John Le Couteur of the 104<sup>th</sup> Foot, a seventeen year-old graduate from the Royal Military College, faced a disciplinary crisis on board his ship when he limited the supply of alcohol to the men. Le Couteur recorded in his journal that the soldiers attacked their one-legged sergeant and: 'threatened to pitch me overboard, a brat of a boy who had never seen a shot fired.'<sup>97</sup> After the soldiers attacked the sergeant again the following day, Le Couteur used violence to restore order, drawing his sword on the soldiers, and sending two offenders to another ship in the convoy: 'one to be well flogged, the other to look on.'<sup>98</sup>

Junior officers appear to have seen flogging as a deterrent, rather than an attempt to reform offenders. What emerges from officer accounts is the sense that coming down hard on minor infractions would provide a salutary lesson for other soldiers, and ensure that discipline was maintained. On arrival in the Peninsula, Woodberry sat on a court martial, and recorded his conflicting views on the outcome:

Sat on a court martial this morning for the first time on two men for unsoldierlike behaviour to their officers. They were both punished this afternoon before the Regiment. No one can detest corporal punishment more than I do, but subordination must be kept up or we shall soon go to the dogs. I am very much afraid some of our men will get themselves into serious trouble when we join Lord Wellington's army, for if they go on with any of their drunken tricks there, Lord W. may perhaps shoot some of them.<sup>99</sup>

Gordon blamed many of the problems of the army during the Corunna retreat to General Sir John Moore's unwillingness to properly punish ill-disciplined soldiers: 'I must consider his own vacillating conduct as the primary cause of the evil, which was increased by a culpable lenity towards flagrant offenders, the effect of which was to encourage breaches of discipline.'<sup>100</sup>

The deterrence value of corporal or capital punishment was heightened by the ceremonial nature of floggings and executions. When a soldier was flogged or executed, the soldiers' regiment was formed to watch the spectacle.<sup>101</sup> Having seen four soldiers, one from his

<sup>96</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign*, p. 62.

<sup>97</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, Mar. 1812, in John Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days: The War of 1812 Journal of Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 104<sup>th</sup> Foot*, ed. Donald Graves (Ottawa, 1993), p. 55.

<sup>98</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, Mar. 1812, in Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, p. 56.

<sup>99</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 8 Feb. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar', p. 16.

<sup>100</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign*, p. 178.

<sup>101</sup> Coss, *All for the King's Shilling*, p. 139; Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle*, pp. 202-3.

regiment, the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot, and three from the 60<sup>th</sup> Foot, executed for desertion, Grattan commended the marching of a regiment past the corpses of the executed soldiers:

This is a good and wholesome practice, for nothing so much awakes in the mind of the soldier, endowed with proper feeling, the dishonour of committing an action which is almost certain to bring him to a disgraceful end, while it deters the bad man from doing that which will cost him all that he has to lose- for such persons have no character- his life.<sup>102</sup>

While he was not in a position to have soldiers flogged in full view of the regiment, Le Couteur still hoped to make an example of a punished soldier. When the flogged soldier returned to the ship, Le Couteur: 'Made Him strip before the whole who could parade and marched him along the ranks ... declaring to them that ... I would carry out the articles of war with full rigour. There was no more trouble – My troops were in hand.'<sup>103</sup>

It is evident from junior officer accounts that corporal or capital punishment was a broadly accepted feature of military discipline, which was necessary for ensuring that soldiers remained in line. There were, however, nuances within this broad acceptance, as well as dissenting views that corporal punishment was immoral. Although there was broad recognition of the necessity of corporal punishment, there is evidence to suggest that officers did not take pride in having men flogged. As noted by Bamford, reliance on corporal punishment to maintain discipline was viewed by the army as a failure of leadership.<sup>104</sup> As such, officers saw a lack of corporal punishment as the sign of a good regiment. Bridgeman wrote home about his regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards: 'it is in the finest order possible, we do not know what corporal punishment is, & I do not think men can behave better than these do, but to be sure they are *guardsmen*.'<sup>105</sup> Nor were junior officers beyond mercy once a soldier was found guilty of a crime. It appears that officers' knowledge of soldiers' character was critical in their decisions to punish. In describing the executions of deserters, Grattan noted the convicted soldiers: 'were bad characters, save one ... He received testimonials from the captain of his company ... highly creditable to him, and Lord Wellington ... resolved that his pardon should be promulgated.'<sup>106</sup>

When acting as junior members of courts martial, junior officers sometimes portrayed themselves as shocked observers to corporal punishment, and emphasised their powerlessness to prevent severe punishments from being meted out. This suggests that certain officers were

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<sup>102</sup> Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, Vol. I, p. 234.

<sup>103</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, Mar. 1812, in Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, p. 56.

<sup>104</sup> Bamford, *Sickness, Suffering, and the Sword*, pp. 66-7.

<sup>105</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 10 Jun. 1812, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, p. 232.

keen to distance themselves from a law code that they found arbitrary and cruel. In his unpublished memoir, Bowlby recalled his time as a young ensign:

Nearly every morning we had a punishment parade. It was my place to attend every court martial as a supernumerary. I was surprised at the trifling offences men were tried for – one man was tried for not being clean on parade and received a sentence of two hundred lashes. As a supernumerary fortunately I had no vote on these occasions.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, there were officers who argued against the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. Hennell, a devout dissenting protestant, criticised flogging in a letter to his brothers:

After getting breakfast, I was for a court-martial which occupied me till 5 o'clock trying 16 prisoners for plundering &c. All except two were punished by flogging that night, each receiving 50 or 100 lashes. I do not now think it proper to give you my opinion upon flogging. Suffice it to say that I always bear in remembrance that I am accountable to a superior tribunal whose Judge has said "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."<sup>108</sup>

While there are criticisms of corporal punishment in contemporary sources, the strongest proclamations against the use of corporal punishment can be found in junior officers' memoirs, reflecting the revived public campaign against flogging during the early 1830s.<sup>109</sup> Memoirists who were critical of corporal punishment often referred to events they witnessed in the army as shaping their anti-flogging views. This suggests that they were not only writing to suit shifting public sensibilities, but also to be actively involved in the campaign against flogging. Ensign and Quartermaster John Harley of the 47<sup>th</sup> Foot described several floggings in his memoir, and declared: 'that I often determined upon making my sentiments public against such an odious system.'<sup>110</sup>

Junior officers who criticised the use of corporal punishment opposed its use on humanitarian grounds, and argued for the reform of offenders, rather than punishment. George Bell, who served as an ensign with the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot during the Peninsular War, was turned against corporal punishment after witnessing continual floggings during 1813: 'Corporal punishment went on

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<sup>107</sup> NAM 2002-02-729, Bowlby, 'Memoir of Captain Bowlby', p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 31 Jul. 1813, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 113.

<sup>109</sup> Dinwiddy, 'The Early Nineteenth-Century Campaign against Flogging', p. 315.

<sup>110</sup> John Harley, *The Veteran, or, Forty Years in the British Service: Comprising Adventures in Egypt, Spain Portugal, Belgium, Holland and Prussia*, Vol. I (London, 1838), p. 254.



everywhere the whole year round. Men were flogged for small offences, and for graver crimes flogged to death – *a thousand lashes* were often awarded by court-martial.<sup>111</sup> George Bell conceded that the army had: ‘some very bad characters’, but noted, ‘such punishments were inhuman.’<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, these critics saw flogging as detrimental to the army, as it tended to brutalise offenders. George Bell suggested: ‘It does not always tend to reform a man by bullying and abusing him before his comrades.’<sup>113</sup> Harley elaborated further: ‘if a soldier receive even but ten lashes, he never can be a good soldier afterwards. His pride is wounded, his spirit is humbled, his person is debased – and detests his profession, neglects his person and equipments, and becomes a useless member of the regiment.’<sup>114</sup>

Critics of corporal punishment saw less punitive forms of discipline as preferable, as they reformed offenders, and strengthened the bonds between soldiers and officers. Although writing largely of his time as a regimental commander, where he abolished flogging in his regiment, George Bell summarised: ‘Kindness is the key to open the human heart, and with that key I reformed the worst offenders.’<sup>115</sup> As a substitute for flogging, Harley argued for other punishments, such as: imprisonment; transferring problem soldiers to colonial regiments; or discharging problem soldiers from the army. Harley believed these punishments would bring: ‘the offender to a proper sense of conduct becoming a British soldier.’<sup>116</sup> Harley argued that the absence of corporal punishment would boost soldiers’ morale, and endear officers to their men:

if [officers] were more bending and less tyrannical than I have known many of them, the latter [soldiers] would be more attached to their superiors, and more particular in attending to their duties ... the soldier would have a feeling of respect for his officer, and the latter would be more inclined to place confidence in the former as a faithful adherent who looked up to him for instruction and advice, and considered him less as a military leader than as a father and a friend.<sup>117</sup>

Although these accounts still emphasised the moral superiority of officers, the arguments junior officers levelled against flogging further highlight how shifting perceptions of common soldiers were making an impact on attitudes within the army. By focusing on reform, rather than punitive punishment or deterrence, suggests a growing appreciation of the humanity and quality of soldiers on the part of army officers.

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<sup>111</sup> George Bell, *Rough Notes by an Old Soldier During Fifty Years’ Service, from Ensign G.B. to Major-General, C.B.* (London, 1867), p. 120.

<sup>112</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 121.

<sup>113</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 121.

<sup>114</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, Vol. I, p. 249.

<sup>115</sup> Bell, *Rough Notes*, p. 121.

<sup>116</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, Vol. I, p. 255.

<sup>117</sup> Harley, *The Veteran*, Vol. I, pp. 249-55.

### ***Into Battle***

It was on the battlefield where officers' leadership skills were put to their greatest test, even though battle was a relatively rare occurrence for British soldiers. Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack have calculated that even a British soldier who fought for the entire Peninsular War would have seen combat on 355 of 2,085 days spent on campaign.<sup>118</sup> Understanding and trust were needed between officers and soldiers to ensure that men would follow their officers into battle in the first instance, and remain disciplined and effective once the bullets started to fly in the second. It was in battle, therefore, where many of the features of junior officers' identities as leaders coalesced. As commanders, junior officers placed a degree of emphasis on the practical components of battlefield leadership, and took pride in their regiments' ability to successfully manoeuvre and remain intact during battle. The tactical role of junior officers in battle was limited, especially in line infantry regiments which tended to operate in large, linear formations. This lack of agency saw junior officers place a high value on their leadership qualities as 'natural' leaders. Extending from the assumption that officers were social and moral superiors to their men, junior officers idealised leadership in battle as leadership from the front, and strove to provide a model of bravery and honour for their men to follow.

The leadership role of junior officers in battle may be broken down into the two categories of command, the role junior officers played in dictating events on the battlefield, and the moral leadership they provided to men in battle. As noted by Bruce Collins, the leadership structure of the British army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was centralised, with regiments expected to do little more than produce 'disciplined and cohesive' battalions that could operate in larger formations commanded by a general.<sup>119</sup> This centralisation limited the scope that junior officers could assume as tacticians. As noted by Muir, examples of regimental officers displaying independent decision making during the Napoleonic Wars are rare, especially within line infantry regiments, where junior officers were usually limited to relaying orders from superior officers, ensuring movements were executed properly, and that gaps in the line were filled quickly.<sup>120</sup> The growing professional standards of British officers saw junior officers take pride in their competence at drill. This pride extended to battlefield manoeuvres; however, this was usually articulated in a regimental, rather than individual, context. Describing his regiment's part in the Battle of Salamanca, Grattan took pride in the 88<sup>th</sup>'s ability to manoeuvre during the chaos of battle: 'He [Pakenham] told Wallace to form line from open

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<sup>118</sup> Matthew McCormack & Kevin Linch, 'Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, 1740-1815', *War in History*, 20 (2013), p. 145.

<sup>119</sup> Bruce Collins, 'Effectiveness and the British Officer Corps, 1793-1815', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool, 2014), p. 72.

<sup>120</sup> Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle*, pp. 183-5.

column without halting, and thus the different companies, by throwing forward their right shoulders, were in line without the slow manoeuvre of a deployment.'<sup>121</sup> As a lieutenant, Grattan's view of the battle was likely limited to what was occurring nearby, making it difficult for him to claim any individual responsibility for the 88<sup>th</sup>'s expediency in battle.

Officers of the light infantry and cavalry had greater opportunities to exercise independent judgement, as they were often operating in advance of line regiments, or were engaged in patrols and outpost duty.<sup>122</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons is a notable example here. Earmarked by Wellington as a talented officer, Cocks was regularly employed as an intelligence officer, and was sent to ascertain information about the movements of French troops in the Peninsula. This required Cocks to exercise independent judgement and tactical ability, a role he revelled in. In August 1810, Cocks wrote to his father:

I am leading a life still wilder, being detached from the army with sixty or seventy men composed of all regiments to watch the enemy on our right ... This is an interesting service, being very independent and giving me the means of knowing all that is going on. I surprised a company of sixty French yesterday... I could only secure a serjeant and three men and a horse... As this was the first time I had been engaged in an enterprise of my own planning and conducting I felt well satisfied with even this very moderate success.<sup>123</sup>

Even within the cavalry, however, Cocks is an exceptional case. Few junior officers had his opportunities to exercise judgement in such a way, especially the most junior ensigns.

The forms of combat during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, therefore, provided limited scope for officers to influence battles through displays of professional ability. As such, junior officers placed great value on their ability to provide a moral example of bravery and fortitude for their men to emulate in battle. This style of leadership also stemmed from the connections British officers made between gentlemanly character and professionalism. As noted by Christopher Duffy and Armstrong Starkey, the historical links between the aristocracy and eighteenth-century militaries resulted in a martial code which prioritised officers' courage and self-sacrifice in battle.<sup>124</sup> Although the aristocracy comprised only a small fraction of British officers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the association between British

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<sup>121</sup> Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, Vol. II, p. 56.

<sup>122</sup> Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle*, p. 186.

<sup>123</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 7 Aug. 1810, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812*, ed. Julia V. Page (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), p. 72.

<sup>124</sup> Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London, 1987), p. 76; Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport, CT, 2003), pp. 70-1.

officers and gentlemanliness saw them make the connection between a gentlemanly manner and effective leadership. Advice literature stressed the importance of mastering fear, and providing an image of calm for men to follow. The *Military Mentor* instructed:

In situations of a very critical nature, the soldier endeavours to read the countenance of his officer. If he sees him firm and composed, he becomes himself confident. If, on the other, he discovers any marks of apprehension in his leader, he is alarmed, or discouraged. Thus, whatever may excite disquietude in the soldier ... an officer ought never to discover any emotion at it. Let his aspect on such occasions be calm, firm, and unmoved; let nothing disclose his secret agitation. Let his manners be more ordinarily forward and free; and let him assume, as much as possible, a sort of gaiety and cheerfulness.<sup>125</sup>

The *Regimental Companion* drew explicit links between gentlemanly control and assured leadership. The *Companion* suggested to the prospective officer, that by conducting himself as: ‘an officer and a gentleman ... The influence which his deportment will have upon the non-commissioned officers and privates of his troop will be sensibly felt, and cannot therefore be too much promoted.’<sup>126</sup>

For their part, junior officers linked gentlemanly accomplishment with the self-control and bravery required to lead soldiers into battle. Woodberry noted:

To be perfect in horsemanship is necessary part of a gentleman’s accomplishments. That a military officer should be an accomplished horseman is a position scarcely necessary to be stated, did not so many John Gilpins in the uniforms of Hussars so continually expose themselves. A man who every moment fears to be divorced from his saddle cannot possibly possess that undisturbed recollection, that cool and undeviating attention, which ought to be given to the troops under his immediate command.<sup>127</sup>

Junior officers viewed their men as having an innate set of qualities, such as bravery, determination, and group loyalty that needed only a strong example of honour by their officers to be effective in battle. Blakiston attributed British success in battle to national character:

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<sup>125</sup> Anon., *The Military Mentor: Being a Series of Letters Recently Written by a General Officer to his Son*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Vol. I (London, 1804), p. 238.

<sup>126</sup> James, *The Regimental Companion*, Vol. I, p. 100.

<sup>127</sup> NAM 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 6 Aug. 1813, ‘The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar’, p. 202.

Individually the British soldier is a fine specimen of the profession. He possesses the steadiness of the German with the spirit of the Frenchman. This must entirely originate in his natural character, for he has not motive to urge him to extraordinary acts. He has little or no prospect of promotion beyond the ranks ... neither his emulation nor his zeal is excited by such distinctions of merit as exist in the French armies; nor is his sense of honour promoted by any peculiar respect to the profession of arms among his countryman.<sup>128</sup>

Officer accounts iterate that the prospect of battle sharpened their men's mind, no matter how disorderly they acted in quarters. In a letter home, Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards remarked on the superiority of British troops in battle: 'For three hundred and sixty days in the year, a Frenchman is a better soldier than an Englishman. Their movements compared with ours are as mail coaches to dung carts ... But at fighting we beat them, and they know it.'<sup>129</sup>

Junior officers extolled the value of setting a brave example, however, it was rarely other British officers that junior officers' compared their conduct to. In her study of military masculinity and British subalterns, Kennedy highlighted how other nations, particularly the Spanish and Portuguese, provided an example by which British officers measured their own masculine identities.<sup>130</sup> Often viewing their Spanish allies as vain and cowardly, British junior officers' views on the Spanish officer corps provide an insight into the conduct they viewed as ideal. Browne criticised the leadership, or lack thereof, of Spanish officers during an attack on a French redoubt at the Nivelle in 1813:

The drums and trumpets of the Don sounded the assault and everything was bustle and confusion in the Spanish ranks - the officers hollering out to their men, not to *come* on but to *go* on, and the men - very unwilling to shew so much disrespect to their officers as to take the lead, and this continuing, until the Spaniards found themselves at the end of their assault, *further* from the battery when they began it.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, Vol. II, pp. 369-70.

<sup>129</sup> Ensign John Mills 8 Oct. 1811, in Mills, *For King and Country*, p. 77.

<sup>130</sup> Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 139-41.

<sup>131</sup> Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal*, p. 247.

These criticisms were consistent throughout the Peninsular War. Simmons assured his parents that the Spanish soldiers would not follow their men into battle: 'The Spanish officers in general are traitors or cowards, and of course the men will not fight when their leaders set off.'<sup>132</sup>

The extent to which junior officers' conduct fulfilled this image of stoic bravery is not entirely clear. Given that the majority of new officers were in their late-teenage years when they were commissioned, this combination of youth and inexperience was unlikely to produce the steadfastness idealised by British officers. At his first experience of battle during the Walcheren campaign, Keep was nearly hit by a French shell. Keep reported to his mother: 'This was my first affray, and Ensign Cameron who was carrying the other Colour, looked at me and laughed to see my face somewhat paler than usual. I was taken by surprise, but soon recovered.'<sup>133</sup> The fear of being dishonoured by refusing to face battle was crucial in compelling junior officers to remain in the field; however, Keep's suggestion that he responded to battle badly suggests that the image of stoic bravery was not always fulfilled. Experience could breed confidence under fire. As revealed by Yuval Noah Harari, the late-eighteenth century saw soldier-authors evaluate military experiences in terms of their revelatory effect on the individual, with each new experience bringing the combatant to a new level of self-understanding.<sup>134</sup> Key amongst these was facing combat and being close to death.<sup>135</sup> Undergoing their baptism of fire likely encouraged officers to face battle coolly. After his first experience of battle as a volunteer in the ranks, Hennell wrote to his brothers: 'When the balls began to whiz I expected every one would strike me. As they increased I minded them less. I viewed calmly the town & to the whizzing of the balls soon became accustomed ... At the bottom of the hill I was accustomed to danger & would have marched up to a cannon's mouth.'<sup>136</sup> Describing his first taste of battle at San Sebastian in 1813, Bridgeman wrote to his mother: 'I do not know why this runs into my head, as for before I had faced the enemy I never thought of it, but somehow or other I feel a different being since our attack on San Sebastian, quite like an *old* soldier, do not laugh at me for this.'<sup>137</sup>

The accounts of junior officers and rankers suggest that experienced officers could not only aspire to the ideal of leading 'from the front', but also modelled their conduct accordingly. The organisation of line infantry put the theory of 'leading by example' into practice, especially for captains. Company commanders were positioned slightly to the front and right of their company

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<sup>132</sup> Second Lieutenant George Simmons, unknown date in Sep. 1809, in Simmons, *A British Rifleman*, p. 33.

<sup>133</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 6 Aug. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 47.

<sup>134</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture, 1450-2000* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 219-21.

<sup>135</sup> Harari, *The Ultimate Experience*, p. 219-21.

<sup>136</sup> Volunteer George Hennell, 5 Apr. 1812, in Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer*, p. 19.

<sup>137</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 26 Sep. 1813, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 146.

in fighting formation.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, as revealed by Muir, regimental officers suffered a disproportionately high casualty rate, suggesting that officers were often found in positions of danger.<sup>139</sup> At the 1811 Battle of Barossa, Blakeney rallied a small group of men after his regiment had suffered heavy casualties. Blakeney: 'proposed charging a howitzer', and lead the assault, unusually carrying a musket in the successful attack.<sup>140</sup> Ranker accounts also make mention of officers who attempted to motivate their men through acts of gallantry. Sergeant William Lawrence of the 40<sup>th</sup> Foot related the bravery of a lieutenant, who quickly moved into position at the head of the company following their captain's death at Waterloo:

a cannon-shot came and took the captain's head clean off.. One of his company who was close by at the time, cried out, "Hullo, there goes my best friend", which caused a lieutenant, who quickly stepped forward to take his place, to say to the man, "Never mind, I will be as good a friend to you as the captain".<sup>141</sup>

Displays of bravery and motivation instilled confidence in the abilities of officers and sustained morale and control during battle. Lawrence highlighted the impact of officers' exhortations in keeping men in place at Waterloo:

The men in their tired state were beginning to despair, but the officers cheered them on continually throughout the day with the cry of "Keep your ground, my men!" It is a mystery to me how it was accomplished, for at last so few were left that there were scarcely enough to form square.<sup>142</sup>

Furthermore, brave officers were held in high regard by soldiers, tightening bonds between the two groups and making soldiers more effective in combat. Ranker Edward Costello of the 95<sup>th</sup> deeply regretted the death of his company commander, who was mortally wounded leading an assault during the Siege of Badajoz in 1812, and recollected the day after the assault: 'I yet felt anxious to see Captain Uniacke ... he was gallant, daring, and just to all whom he commanded ... none were seen so often in the van as Uniacke; his affability and personal courage had rendered him the idol of the men of his company.'<sup>143</sup> To rankers' eyes, not all officers fulfilled the ideal of brave leadership. Costello and his comrades divided: 'officers into two classes; the "come on" and the "go on" ... To the honour of the service, the latter, with us Rifles, were exceedingly few in

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<sup>138</sup> G.F. Nafziger and S.J. Park, *The British Military: Its System and Organisation, 1803-1815* (Cambridge, ON, 1983), pp. 33-5.

<sup>139</sup> Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle*, p. 190.

<sup>140</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, pp. 191-2.

<sup>141</sup> William Lawrence, *The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence: A Hero of the Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns*, ed. George Nugent Banks (London, 1886), pp. 210-11.

<sup>142</sup> Lawrence, *The Autobiography of Sergeant William Lawrence*, p. 211.

<sup>143</sup> Edward Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier, or, the Memoirs of Edward Costello* (London, 1841), p. 151

number.”<sup>144</sup> It is unlikely, therefore, that all officers fulfilled the image of bravery and self-sacrifice espoused by advice literature and officers.

Junior officers’ attitudes towards leadership in battle, therefore, were predicated on the same assumption of social, cultural, and moral superiority which characterised their wider identities as leaders. Established aristocratic martial codes and the social gulf which existed between officers and rankers were important in shaping junior officers’ identities as leaders, as they encouraged deference on the part of rankers, and stressed the importance of bravery and leadership by example. Junior officers’ attitudes towards rankers; however, were also shaped by evolving perceptions of common soldiers during the late-eighteenth century, and by the culture of sensibility. Junior officers could view their men as humane objects of sympathy, encouraging a paternalistic style of leadership that saw officers pay attention to their men’s wellbeing and morale. In addition, the enlightenment values of cleanliness and order shaped junior officers’ role as leaders. The paternal role officers assumed over their men encouraged officers to search for ways to care for their men, and to question the value of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure; however, paternalism as practiced by junior British army officers remained a ‘top-down’ form of leadership, which served to highlight the social and moral differences between officers and men.

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<sup>144</sup> Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier*, p. 151.



## Chapter Seven: National and Patriotic Identities

Writing to a friend in the aftermath of the 1813 Battle of Vitoria, Lieutenant James Hope, a Scottish officer of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Highland Regiment, described the prelude to the battle: ‘The sun burst from behind the gloomy clouds, to spread his cheering rays over fields yet unstained with blood ... over heights, where the best blood of Britain was soon to flow:- to cheer the Sons of Freedom, on their march to the field of honour.’<sup>1</sup> Hope’s romantic depiction of the lead-up to battle likely reflects his sense of glory in taking part in one of the British army’s greatest successes of the Peninsular War, and was matched by his idealisation of the British soldier. This description encapsulates many of the characteristics of British national identity within the British army of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Being a part of a truly British army, who were united in a common cause, appears to have allowed Hope to identify with a ‘British’ national identity. As part of one of five regiments that based their regimental identities on Highland culture, and whose soldiers wore kilts, Hope’s most obvious point of reference may have been Highland national and military identity, yet he still chose to emphasise the ‘Britishness’ of the army at Vitoria.<sup>2</sup> Andrew Mackillop, however, has demonstrated how investment in Highland national identity was only one factor in motivating eighteenth-century Highland military service.<sup>3</sup> While Hope was certain of the connection between military service and patriotism, this connection was not self-evident for all officers throughout the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars. This chapter explores the impact of military service on national identity within the British army, and junior officers’ evolving relationship with the British nation.

Warfare has figured prominently in historians’ studies of eighteenth-century British national identity. In her influential *Britons*, Linda Colley argued that recurring war was central to the construction of a coherent British national identity, by reinforcing Britons’ sense of the French as a national ‘other’, and allowing groups from the British periphery, such as the Scots, to demonstrate their loyalty through military service.<sup>4</sup> Despite this centrality, studies of the relationship between military service and national identities within the British army are relatively recent. Stephen Conway briefly explored how the national diversity of the British

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant James Hope, 27 Jun. 1813, in James Hope, *Letters from Spain and Portugal, and from Belgium and France* (London, 1819), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Discovering British Regimental Traditions* (Risborough, 2007), pp. 45-6.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Mackillop, ‘For King, Country, and Regiment?: Motive and Identity within Highland Soldiering, 1746-1815’, in *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience, 1550-1900*, ed. Andrew Mackillop and Steve Murdoch (Leiden, 2002), pp. 185-212.

<sup>4</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT, 2014), pp. 17-8, 118-34. Also see Robert Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero: The Image of the Highlander, 1745-1830* (East Linton, 1995), pp. 150-80.

army during the Seven Years' War allowed soldiers of different nations to recognise each other as Britons.<sup>5</sup> For the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Catriona Kennedy has explored the complex web of national identities and loyalties within the British military, and demonstrated how this was reflected in a relatively weak sense of 'British' national identity.<sup>6</sup> Gavin Daly has also revealed how British soldiers in the Peninsular War, with the possible exception of Irish Catholic rankers, found a sense of national commonality by defining themselves against Iberian populations.<sup>7</sup> In light of this scholarship, this chapter will explore the relationship between junior officers' military service, and their national and patriotic identities. In contrast to the French Republican armies, British soldiers were not exposed to a systematic program of nationalist and ideological propaganda.<sup>8</sup> While some regiments actively promoted either a British or sub-British national identity, British junior officers' national identities were open to a wide range of influences. The first section of this chapter will explore how junior officers found points of similarity and difference with other nationalities which marked out their identities as members of a British and western-European cultural bloc. The second section examines how junior officers' identities as men of honour encouraged a reciprocal relationship between individual and national honour which brought officers into a closer alignment with the British nation; however, one that was expressed because their expectations of recognition went unsatisfied. The final two sections explore how junior officers' patriotic expression evolved during the course of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars as they responded to evolving political circumstances. Junior officers' shock at the threat to European society that the French Republic represented generated a loyalist and conservative patriotism. As the ideological fervour of the early-1790s dissipated, and war with France assumed the character of a war for national survival, junior officers in the Napoleonic period found a broader voice for their patriotic expression, and could come to embrace critiques of the ruling establishment that would have dismayed their Revolutionary-era predecessors.

### ***British and European Identities***

The 'British' context in which junior officers served had the effect of dissolving national differences between members of the British officer corps. The British army was nationally diverse: in 1813 the rank and file was made up of one-half English and Welsh, one-third Irish,

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 207-14.

<sup>6</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 53-63.

<sup>7</sup> Gavin Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War: Encounters with Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (Basingstoke, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Marie-Cécile Thorat, *From Valmy to Waterloo: France at War, 1792-1815* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 107-11.

and one sixth Scottish, with many regiments being a patchwork of different nations.<sup>9</sup> This diversity had been established during the eighteenth century: sixteen per cent of the rank and file during the Seven Years' War coming from Scotland.<sup>10</sup> In the officer corps, around one-quarter of officers were Scottish, and thirty-five per cent Irish.<sup>11</sup> As noted by Conway, this national diversity helped to foster a pan-British identity, while still allowing for sub-British and European identities to flourish.<sup>12</sup> With its emphasis on politeness, the close confines officer corps was effective at collapsing national barriers, and reminding officers of their cultural similarities. Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, a Scottish officer in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, wrote to his sister after he introduced a type of Scottish fiddle to his fellow officers: 'I have brought the devil completely into fashion in the regiment, it is at present quite the *rage in London* but very few of the officers had ever seen it, they are all now sawing away at it as fast as they can.'<sup>13</sup> Keep described the diversity of his regimental mess to his mother: 'We have young men from the three Kingdoms and it forms a strange medley (not uncondusive however to the pleasures of the service in which we are engaged.)'<sup>14</sup> National traditions could converge with the sociability of the officer corps. On Saint Patrick's Day in 1813, Lieutenant George Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, a nominally Irish regiment, described the day's festivities: 'the custom in the Regiment on this day, is, that the English officers should treat, I asked Bolton, Burk, Deane, Chambers, Rowls & Pu[ll]sford who did me the honour of their company. I made them quite groggy & they departed in peace about 12 o'clock.'<sup>15</sup>

As noted by John Cookson, the Napoleonic Wars saw some British regiments consolidate their identities as 'national' regiments, identities which were then built on during the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Regiments with a strong national hue could divide opinion in the army. The increasing influence of Scots in the British state from the mid-eighteenth century had initially inspired a wave of English nationalism that criticised Scottish encroachment, and sought to reaffirm English rights.<sup>17</sup> While less virulent during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars,

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<sup>9</sup> John Cookson, *British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 126-7.

<sup>10</sup> Conway, *War, State, and Society*, p. 208.

<sup>11</sup> John Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Conway, 'Scots, Britons, and Europeans: Scottish Military Service, 1739-1783', *Historical Research*, 215 (2009), pp. 129-30; Conway, *War, State, and Society*, pp. 210-1.

<sup>13</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 2 Apr. 1810, in Charles Kinloch, *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, 1806-16*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2007), p. 48.

<sup>14</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 14 Jan. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> National Army Museum, London (hereafter, NAM) 1968-07-267, Lieutenant George Woodberry, 17 Mar. 1813, 'The Idle Companion of a Young Hussar in 1813', p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> John Cookson, 'Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, ed. Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 35-7.

<sup>17</sup> Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (New York, 1987), pp. 196-197.

English officers could still display a cultural disdain for officers from the British periphery. Despite being offered a lieutenancy in the 91<sup>st</sup> Highlanders, Ensign Thomas Bunbury of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot declined, as: 'The 91<sup>st</sup> being a Highland regiment, and at that time very clannish, it struck me that I might be subject to persecution and annoyance.'<sup>18</sup> As noted in Chapter Four, English officers could identify with regiments which exhibited a strong non-English national identity, suggesting that overt displays of sub-British nationalism were not entirely problematic. Linda Colley and Robert Clyde have both demonstrated how national regiments, particularly the Highland regiments, within the army could also serve to highlight these nations' service and sacrifice to the British nation.<sup>19</sup> British officers made similar connections. Preparing to embark on the 'Great Expedition' to Walcheren in 1809, Keep wrote to his mother: 'some Regiments of Highlanders with their martial costume I thought very elegant and when in movement or close column their black plumes and tartans had a very picturesque effect, and even their bagpipes had charm. My first introduction to these warlike North Britons inspired me with a great respect for them.'<sup>20</sup>

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; however, it was Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom that presented the greatest fault line within British national identity. The Irish had an increasing presence in the British army and politics during the eighteenth century, with Ireland a crucial recruiting ground since the 1750s. Meanwhile, the absence of Catholic relief in the 1801 Act of Union that incorporated Ireland into the United Kingdom reinforced sectarian divisions.<sup>21</sup> British views of Ireland and the Irish during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were shaped by Irish rebellion during the 1790s, with Ireland perceived as wild, unruly, and backward, ruled by a vulgar gentry.<sup>22</sup> The account of Charles Crowe, an English ensign who joined the overwhelmingly Irish 27<sup>th</sup> Foot, or 'Eniskillens', highlights how English officers could see their Irish comrades as cultural outliers. Joining a regiment that cultivated an overtly Irish identity and whose officer corps was largely Irish proved chastening for Crowe. While finding two Irish subalterns, Pollock and Harding, to be: 'the perfect gentleman', and, 'the little gentleman in manners and appearance'; Crowe formed less favourable opinions of the other

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Bunbury, *Reminiscences of a Veteran: Being Personal and Military Adventures in Portugal, Spain France, Malta, New South Wales, Norfolk Island, New Zealand, Andaman Islands and India*, Vol. I (London, 1861), p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 17-8, 118-34; Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero*, pp. 150-80.

<sup>20</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 17 Jul. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 36.

<sup>21</sup> For patterns of Irish service during the eighteenth century, see Hannah Murtagh, 'Irish Soldiers Abroad, 1600-1800', in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 294-314; Kevin Whelan, 'The Other Within: Ireland, Britain and the Act of Union', in *Acts of Union: The Causes, Contexts, and Consequences of the Act of Union*, ed. Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (Dublin 2001), pp. 13-33.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Bartlett, 'Britishness, Irishness, and the Act of Union', in *Acts of Union*, pp. 250-3.

Irish officers.<sup>23</sup> Crucial in forming this view was the belief that the Irish were eager duellists, and out of step with the standards of polite refinement.<sup>24</sup> Crowe described one officer, Weir: 'a queer poet, an uncouth quarrelsome fellow'; and was warned by Pollock that another officer was: 'a very specious dangerous chap! He will be sworn friend with you one hour, and in the next will call you out to fight a duel.'<sup>25</sup> Compounding this view was the belief that these officers belonged to a clique of Irish officers, as Crowe ensured that he: 'took care to have the Scotchmen present' as support when mediating a dispute between officers.<sup>26</sup> That Crowe was able to form identifiable relationships with some Irish others, while drawing cultural distinctions with others, highlights the importance of politeness to facilitating national identification.

Although anti-Catholicism was central to how British soldiers defined themselves in the Peninsula, the extent to which internal adherence to Protestantism helped foster pan-British allegiances is debatable.<sup>27</sup> While Michael Snape has argued that patterns of religious observance in the nineteenth-century British army reflected those of civilian society; religious observance does not appear to have been central to junior officers' sense of identity.<sup>28</sup> Ensign George Hennell of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Foot, a devout Unitarian Protestant, described the blasphemy of his fellow officers to his brothers:

I do not suppose there was ever a person in the army more quizzed than I have been. The officers of the army are none of them half characters. They do not content themselves with a little swearing & joking about serious things but they are generally openly profane & coolly and deliberately take the seat of the scorner. My Bible has been attacked in every way & the more impious the quotation the louder the laugh. Indeed such a pitch has it arrived that what would shock you would not raise a laugh here.<sup>29</sup>

While Hennell's adherence to a dissenting branch of Protestantism may have made him an isolated figure, his targeting by other officers appears more associated with his piety than his choice of religion. This suggests that the officer corps could be disdainful of any form of worship. The ambiguous role Protestantism played in the officer corps is further highlighted by the status

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<sup>23</sup> Charles Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier: The Peninsular War Journals of Lieutenant Charles Crowe of the Inniskillings, 1812-14*, ed. Gareth Glover (Barnsley, 2011), p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin 2009), p. 329.

<sup>25</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, chapter 6.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldiers from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London, 2005), pp. 120-1.

<sup>29</sup> Ensign George Hennell, 8 Jul. 1813, in George Hennell, *A Gentleman Volunteer: The Letters of George Hennell from the Peninsular War, 1812-1813*, ed. Michael Glover (London, 1979), p. 103.

of Irish Catholic officers. Officially forbidden from holding commissions outside of Ireland, Catholic officers could still be found in the British army.<sup>30</sup> Despite these impediments, as revealed by Catriona Kennedy, Irish Catholic officers could pursue successful careers in the army, and could also develop a British identity.<sup>31</sup> Peter Jennings, a careerist Irish Catholic officer who served in the French army before the French Revolution, enjoyed a relatively successful career in the British army, and left the army as a captain in 1808. As emphasised by Kennedy, Jennings' place within a tradition of professional Irish military service eased his passage into the British army, and allowed him to reconcile his potentially conflicting loyalties.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, Jennings appeared free to practice his faith, having his daughter baptised in Brazil in 1806.<sup>33</sup>

Historians of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars have recently begun to explore the relationship between military service, travel, and the construction of national identities through the encountering of national 'others'.<sup>34</sup> Gavin Daly and Kennedy have explored how British officers and soldiers' experiences on campaign in Southern Europe, North Africa, and the West Indies reinforced their belonging to European civilisation, as they contrasted the modernity of western and northern Europe with the backwardness of the cultures they encountered.<sup>35</sup> In addition to encounters with foreign civilians, military service brought British junior officers into contact with foreign officers and soldiers as allies, opponents, or, in the case of German forces, as fellow members of the British army. The eighteenth-century British army was influenced by the pan-European 'military revolution' of the Enlightenment and the principles of 'limited war'. Although nebulous, these values placed a premium on troop organisation, and proper conduct of war shaped by humanity, and mutual respect between combatants, reinforced by a shared culture of gentlemanly civility and martial honour.<sup>36</sup> Examining the British army during the American War of Independence, Stephen Conway argued that professional standards and a shared belief in the proper conduct of war were the key criteria for fostering respect between

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<sup>30</sup> J.R. Western, 'Roman Catholics Holding Military Commission in 1798', *The English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), pp. 428-32.

<sup>31</sup> Catriona Kennedy, "'True Brittons and Real Irish': Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars", in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, ed. Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 42-6.

<sup>32</sup> Kennedy, "'True Brittons and Real Irish'", pp. 42-6.

<sup>33</sup> NAM 1983-01-102, Peter R. Jennings, 'Diary of Peter R. Jennings'.

<sup>34</sup> Leighton James, 'Travel Writing and Encounters with National "Others" in the Napoleonic Wars', *History Compass*, 7 (2009), pp. 1246-53.

<sup>35</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, especially chapter 5; Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Civilian and Military Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 92-111.

<sup>36</sup> David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Modern Warfare* (London, 2007), pp. 21-51; Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of the Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport, CT, 2003), pp. 52-63, 93-8.

combatants of different nations belonging to 'military Europe'.<sup>37</sup> Prioritising professional affiliation in this manner, however, divorces soldiers from the nations from which they were drawn, and obscures the complex relationship between militaries and nations. In his study of Germans in the British service during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, Mark Wishon has revealed how the national stereotype of Germans as boorish and dour converged with professional interest and mutual respect to shape interactions between British and German soldiers in the eighteenth-century British army.<sup>38</sup> By observing and comparing different armies against the expected standards of military conduct, junior officers came to define themselves as part of a Western European cultural and ethnic group, which had implications for how officers of different nationalities associated within the British army.

British officers who encountered non-European armies found them unrecognisable, highlighting how cross-military encounters provided a point of differentiation for forming pan-European identities. Serving in North America during the War of 1812, Lieutenant John Le Couteur of the 109<sup>th</sup> Foot regularly wrote to his father about his lack of respect for the Native American troops used as auxiliaries by the British and American armies: 'The Indians are cunning, cowardly and revengeful in the highest degree, *brave* only when their enemy is Broken or flying, and then the tomahawk and scalping knife are liberally made use of. I have witnessed it with horror, but an Indian if you face him, will never stand.'<sup>39</sup> Describing the scalping of dead American soldiers to his father, Le Couteur contrasted the barbarity of the frontier with the civilisation of Britain: 'after they had scalped 45 and ... they were dressing their scalps and some of them after picking of the flesh, eat it. This a fact. Let the Ladies pass their comments, and rejoice they are blessed in a country where such deeds were never heard of; happy little Island.'<sup>40</sup> Comparing Britain's Ottoman allies during the 1801 Egyptian campaign with European armies in his diary, Lieutenant Thomas Evans of the 8<sup>th</sup> Foot noted the: 'little order or regularity in their movements', and described the Ottomans as: 'the most abominable and filthiest set of ragamuffins (soldiers, the very name they are a disgrace to)'.<sup>41</sup> M.E. Yapp has explored the image of the Ottoman Empire in early-modern and modern European culture, and has revealed how Europeans perceived that the secular and religious differences between the two cultures made the Ottomans barbaric and despotic.<sup>42</sup> These prevailing views informed British perceptions of

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Conway, 'The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 67 (2010), pp. 89-99.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Wishon, *German Forces and the British Army: Interactions and Perceptions, 1742-1815* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 17-42.

<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 24 Oct. 1813, in John Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days: The War of 1812 Journal of John Le Couteur, 104<sup>th</sup> Foot*, ed. Donald E. Graves (Ottawa, 1993), p. 146.

<sup>40</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, 24 Oct. 1813, in Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, pp. 146-7.

<sup>41</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 1 Jun. 1801, pp. 147-8.

<sup>42</sup> M.E. Yapp, 'Europe in the Turkish Mirror', *Past and Present*, 136 (1992), pp. 144-8.

Ottoman forces in Egypt. In particular, Evans viewed Ottoman atrocities against local Arab populations as indicative of their uncivilised nature: 'the unfortunate Arabs, the proper natives and original possessors of the land, suffer both in their persons and property by the hands of these savage and merciless banditti. But an attempt to detail one half their enormities, would be to write a volume, suffice it to say that I often feel, and blush for our *anti-Christian alliance*.'<sup>43</sup> Reflecting the eighteenth-century belief that racial and national characteristics were in a state of evolution depending on exposure to different influences, British officers' racial distinctions were not fixed.<sup>44</sup> Junior officers saw the potential for degeneration, even in nations with close national ties to Britain. Le Couteur feared the barbarising effects of life on the American frontier, and wrote to his father: 'The Americans on the Ohio and Kentucky lands, are nearly Indians, they use the Scalping knife and Tomahawk, and are merely a civilised Savage.'<sup>45</sup>

There were nuances within this collective European identity, and junior officers were engaged in a constant process of differentiation with their European allies and enemies.<sup>46</sup> These comparisons generated a sense of British exceptionalism, as British officers saw the British army as reflecting the humanity, quality, and rights of British citizens. As shown by Daly, the Portuguese army rose in British soldiers' estimation under the influence of British honour and discipline.<sup>47</sup> British officers were keen to point out the effects of tyrannical government on armies, effectively contrasting this with the humane military which the British constitution created. As shown by Larry Wolff, eighteenth-century Western Europeans viewed Eastern Europe as barbaric and backwards, and saw the institution of serfdom as reducing entire nations to the status of slaves.<sup>48</sup> British officers were liable to see their Central and Eastern European allies as inhumane, owing to their living under despotic rule. Those who served alongside Russian forces saw this form of rule as manifesting in an arbitrary system of military punishment and a submissive soldiery. Observing the routine beating of Russian rankers by their officers during the 1814 Holland expedition, Lieutenant John Dunbar-Moodie of the 21<sup>st</sup> Foot was surprised to find that Russian officers were shocked at the flogging of British soldiers.<sup>49</sup> For Dunbar-Moodie, what differentiated the British and Russian armies was the right of even private soldiers to a court-martial before subjection to corporal punishment: '[flogging]

<sup>43</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 8 Jul. 1801, p. 165.

<sup>44</sup> Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, PA, 2000), pp. 4-6.

<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 24 Oct. 1813, in Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> John Richard Moores, *Representations of France in English Satirical Prints, 1740-1832* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 143-8; Wishon, *German Forces and the British Army*, pp. 18-33.

<sup>47</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 153-5.

<sup>48</sup> Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA, 1994), pp. 81-8.

<sup>49</sup> John W. Dunbar-Moodie, 'Narrative of the Campaign in Holland in 1814, with Details of the Attack on Bergen-Op-Zoom, in *Memoirs of the Late War*, Vol. II (London, 1831), p. 277.



could at least not be inflicted at the caprice of the individual. We may here observe the different effects produced on the character of men by a free and despotic system of Government: it was evidently not the *nature* but the *degree*, of punishment in our service which shocked the Russian prejudices.<sup>50</sup>

British officers' closest affinity was with their American and French enemies. Serving in North America reinforced the similarities between the British and American combatants for Le Couteur. Le Couteur recorded the linguistic and racial similarities between the British and Americans after fraternising with some American officers:

several American officers rode from Fort George to chat to me: Colonels Cutting and Preston, Majors Malcom, Cummings and Johnston, Captains Jones, Christie and Chapman. Strange indeed did it appear to me to find so many names, "familiar household words", as enemies – the very names of Officers in our own army. How uncomfortably like a civil war it seemed when we were in good-humoured friendly converse.<sup>51</sup>

Cultural similarities with Americans also drove home how close the British and American were. Generally impressed with the quality of society in much of North America, Le Couteur described an American officer in his diary as: 'a nice looking blood in English shooting togger.'<sup>52</sup>

Junior officers' attitudes towards French soldiers have implications for Linda Colley's argument that the creation of a British national identity was primarily the result of Britons defining themselves against the French national 'other'.<sup>53</sup> This view has been revised by recent scholarship. Stephen Conway and Robin Eagle have acknowledged the cultural interaction and mutual respect between France and Britain during the eighteenth century, which included polite cosmopolitanism and a shared Western European cultural identity.<sup>54</sup> This mutual respect is evident in junior officers' descriptions of interactions between British and French soldiers, but was also coloured by circumstance.<sup>55</sup> British attitudes towards French soldiers evolved during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The meritocracy of the French Republican army shocked British officers' sensibilities, and weakened the cultural bonds

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<sup>50</sup> Dunbar-Moodie, 'Narrative of the Campaign in Holland in 1814', p. 277.

<sup>51</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, 11 Sep. 1813, in Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, p. 135.

<sup>52</sup> Lieutenant John Le Couteur, journal, 10 Sep. 1813, in Le Couteur, *Merry Hearts Make Light Days*, p. 133.

<sup>53</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Conway, *Britain Ireland, and Continental Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Similarities, Connections, Identities* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 109-24; Robin Eagles, 'Beguiled by France? The English Aristocracy, 1748-1848', in *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, 1750-1850*, ed. Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (Manchester, 1997), pp. 60-74; Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, pp. 1-16; Moores, *Representations of France*, pp. 37-50, 143-8; Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, p. 15.

<sup>55</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, pp. 108-11, 129-33.

between the two armies. Guarding French prisoners in November 1793, Lieutenant Thomas Powell of the 14<sup>th</sup> Foot recorded his low opinion of French officers raised from the ranks: 'A miserable set; seemed to be picked from amongst the great Ruffians of their Prvt's. There was only one Gentleman like man amongst them.'<sup>56</sup> Of all the French officers Powell encountered, he reserved his greatest respect for an Irish officer in the French service, who: 'did not seem to like the side he had taken, by any means, & would have deserted with us with pleasure, if his honour would have allow'd him.'<sup>57</sup> The bonds of respect between British and French officers were re-established as the ideological tension of the early-1790s dissipated. Captured by the French during the 1799 Holland campaign, Lieutenant Charles Steevens of the 20<sup>th</sup> Foot recalled the: 'humanity and attention' of his captors and highlighted: 'to what extremes the French frequently carry their *politesse*'; as the French displayed their civility by ensuring that British prisoners were well-fed; had their wounds attended to; and were kept separate from Russian prisoners.<sup>58</sup>

Napoleon's ascent entrenched the cultural similarities between British and French combatants. While Napoleonic military culture differed of the honour culture of the Old Regime, particularly in its focus on merit; British officers found their Napoleonic counterparts more identifiable than their Republican forebears.<sup>59</sup> Antipathy for Napoleon or a desire to see France defeated did not diminish this respect. Reflecting on Napoleon's 1799 defeat at the Siege of Acre, Evans recorded his conflicting views in his diary:

Thus perhaps ends the career of a General who has not only been the terror of the World but (in one sense) the admiration of the greater part of it, and of an Army which has proved itself possessed of the most heroic intrepidity, fortitude and courage, qualities in an Army which every lover of military fame, and what's truly great must admire, and allow merited, at least, a better and more deserving fate than their graves on the burning sands of Egyptia's inhospitable shore.<sup>60</sup>

The honour of the French in war was seen as indicative of the quality of French national character. Lieutenant James Girdlestone of the 31<sup>st</sup> Foot wrote to his sister from the Peninsula: 'In four or five days we may expect to meet with our noble enemy (I may say noble, for I believe there is no other nation in Europe besides our own that deserve that name).'<sup>61</sup> Positive

<sup>56</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Thomas Powell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Powell', p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Powell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Powell', p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Steevens, *Reminiscences of My Military Life, from 1795 to 1818*, ed. Nathaniel Steevens (Winchester, 1878), pp. 12-5.

<sup>59</sup> Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 171-8; David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Modern Warfare* (London, 2007), pp. 243-4.

<sup>60</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 31 Aug. 1799, p. 20.

<sup>61</sup> NAM 2012-06-6, Lieutenant James Girdlestone, 14 Feb. 1810.

interactions between British and French officers are particularly notable in accounts of the Peninsular War, where mutual distaste for Iberian culture reinforced cultural similarities between British and French enemies.<sup>62</sup>

Central to Colley's argument that the French constituted the dominant national 'other' to Britons during the eighteenth century, was the contrasting of the ignorant and oppressed French with the personally independent British. This image was prominent in anti-French propaganda during the French Wars.<sup>63</sup> The portrayal of Napoleon as a tyrant may have provided fertile ground for such an opinion to form; however, junior officers' sense of cultural affinity with French officers was resilient to these stereotypes. What emerges from junior officers' accounts is the sense of a French army who were kept in ignorance by Napoleonic propaganda, but fully aware of this fact. The exchange of newspapers was common in British and French fraternisation, prompting reflections on the effects of Napoleon's press restrictions. Writing to his mother from the Pyrenees in late-1813, Lieutenant William Thornton Keep noted, 'The French officers on the banks of the Nive were kept in great ignorance of passing events. To enlighten them a little we threw over the papers containing patches of Bonaparte's defeats. The French here certainly show no signs of attachment to him, and without that how unenviable must the condition of such potentates be.'<sup>64</sup> Other officers portrayed the French as less passive. Ensign Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards noted to his mother, 'the French officers in our front are very anxious for English papers, they plainly tell us, that they cannot believe their own papers, which they frequently send over to us.'<sup>65</sup> The military provided a framework in which junior officers could reflect on the nature of national identity. The officer corps' emphasis on politeness provided a culture which transcended national differences, which had the effect of reinforcing a sense of 'British' commonality. British officers also reflected on their relationship with other nations. Through their interactions with other militaries, British junior officers revealed how they saw themselves as belonging to a western-European cultural grouping.

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<sup>62</sup> Laurence Montroussier-Favre, 'Remembering the Other: The Peninsular War in the Autobiographical Accounts of British and French Soldiers', in *War Memories: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture*, ed. Alan Forrest, Étienne François, and Karen Hagemann (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 62-71; Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsula War*, p. 218.

<sup>63</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 33-5; Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 149-51.

<sup>64</sup> Lieutenant William Thornton Keep, 28 Dec. 1813, in William Thornton Keep, *In the Service of the King: The Letters of William Thornton Keep, at Home, Walcheren, and in the Peninsula, 1808-1814*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1997), p. 195.

<sup>65</sup> Ensign Orlando Bridgeman, 25 Sep. 1813, in Orlando Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War: The Letters of Captain The Honourable Orlando Bridgeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1812-1815*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 146.

### *Honour, Glory, and the Nation*

Honour was a core value for junior British officers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and was central to the everyday conduct of junior officers.<sup>66</sup> Junior officers' identities as men of honour were effective in binding them to the nation by encouraging a reciprocal relationship between personal and national honour. This connection was nebulous, however, and was marked by degrees of separation, as junior officers used their membership of pan-military groups to mediate their connection to national honour. In *Britons*, Colley has demonstrated how the British aristocracy cultivated a public image of duty and heroic self-sacrifice for the nation, which then influenced individual conduct by others.<sup>67</sup> With less emphasis on heroism, Hannah Smith and John Cookson have also argued that British officers' sense of duty to the British state strengthened during the eighteenth century.<sup>68</sup> These ideals appealed to junior officers, suggesting that this culture was influential to some degree. Preparing to depart for the Peninsula in 1812, Keep wrote to his mother: 'I know that your heart, tender as it is, must exult when you consider that I am going forth in a cause that does honour to the Country and profession to which I belong.'<sup>69</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards wrote in his diary in 1811: 'I rejoice in contributing in any way my assistance to add to the renown of my country.'<sup>70</sup> Investing in national honour was not entirely altruistic and the potential for glory provided an inducement to public service.<sup>71</sup> The aristocratic Captain Edward Charles Cocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Dragoons directly conflated personal and national honour. In a letter to his uncle, Cocks described soldiers as: 'a body of men giving up many individual pleasures and comforts for a general national advantage, coupled certainly with the hope of personal fame.'<sup>72</sup>

The elite connotations of this culture, however, made it problematic for junior officers. Although the desire for glory may have encouraged emulation of elite self-sacrifice, junior officers' middling status in the army engendered a sense of obscurity. This sense of obscurity limited the

<sup>66</sup> Catriona Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle: Military Masculinity and the British Army Officer during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Gender, War, and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, and Jane Rendall (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 133-6.

<sup>67</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 185-90.

<sup>68</sup> Hannah Smith, 'The Army, Provincial Urban Communities, and Loyalist Cultures in England, 1714-50', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15 (2011), pp. 139-58; John Cookson, 'Service without Politics? Army, Militia, and Volunteers in Britain during the American and French Revolutionary Wars', *War in History*, 10 (2003), pp. 382-3.

<sup>69</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 20 Aug. 1812, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 86.

<sup>70</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 26 Mar. 1811, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K. Thompson (London, 1981), p. 11.

<sup>71</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 185-90.

<sup>72</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 20 Dec. 1811, in Edward Charles Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812*, ed. Julia V. Page (Tunbridge Wells, 1986), p. 156.

extent to which junior officers felt they could soften the dishonour of a defeat through heroic conduct. Through conspicuous displays of gallantry or sacrifice, senior officers could retrieve their honourable reputations from seemingly dire situations. General Sir John Moore's dying phrase at the 1809 Battle of Corunna: 'I hope the people of England will be satisfied. I hope my country will do me justice'; was highlighted by Colley as an example of the culture of elite heroism shaping individual conduct.<sup>73</sup> Moore's expedition to Spain ended in ultimate defeat. The British force lost over one-fifth of its men after a harrowing winter retreat; yet, Moore's heroic death fostered a positive and romanticised image of him after the campaign.<sup>74</sup> Moore's heroism was not lost on those he commanded, and junior officers on the Corunna campaign applauded his bravery. Captain Edwin Griffith of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars, a veteran of the Corunna campaign, reflected in his journal in the aftermath of the Battle of Corunna: 'indeed he did commit some errors, but he has fully expiated them by the manner in which he terminated his career and he will ever remain a bright pattern for emulation to all those who like him, are desirous of leading a life of honor and dying a death of glory.'<sup>75</sup> Corunna veterans' criticisms of Moore's conduct suggest, however, that junior officers did not share in Moore's repatriation. Griffith attributed the army's shame to Moore: 'he certainly forfeited to a very great degree the confidence of his army ... Sir John subjected his army to the humiliating accusation of being actually driven into the sea by the French.'<sup>76</sup> Captain Alexander Gordon, also of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars, was more strident in criticising Moore in his journal:

It may appear invidious to reflect upon the character of an amiable and gallant officer, whose death in the moment of victory has cast a veil of glory over the errors of his judgement; but it is only an act of justice towards the brave men he commanded to point out the causes of the misbehaviour which, unhappily, tarnished their fame.<sup>77</sup>

Junior officers' sense of shame at the overall defeat experienced in the Corunna campaign suggests that status and glory were inherently linked within the British officer corps. While Moore was able to retrieve his honourable reputation by a conspicuous display of bravery, this sacrifice was notable because of his high rank. For junior officers who felt they were languishing

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<sup>73</sup> General Sir John Moore, quoted in Colley, *Britons*, p. 185.

<sup>74</sup> Charles Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History* (London, 2003), p. 155; J.R. Watson, *Romanticism and War: A Study of the British Romantic Period Writers and the Napoleonic Wars* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 132-7; Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 74.

<sup>75</sup> Captain Edwin Griffith, journal, in *From Corunna to Waterloo: The Letters and Journal of Two Napoleonic Hussars, Major Edwin Griffith and Captain Frederick Philips, 15<sup>th</sup> (King's) Hussars, 1801-1816*, ed. Gareth Glover (London, 2007), p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> Captain Edwin Griffith, journal, in *From Corunna to Waterloo*, p. 89.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer in the Corunna Campaign, 1808-1809: The Journal of Captain Gordon of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars*, ed. H.C. Wyllie (London, 1913), p. 209.

in obscurity, there was a lingering sense of dishonour surrounding the Corunna campaign, as their status precluded them from making a similarly noticeable display of heroism.

Given these ambiguities, group associations were a vital conduit between personal and national honour.<sup>78</sup> This connection was not entirely incidental, as some regiments actively conflated regimental and national honour, particularly by connecting military honour to a personal commitment to the monarchy. In 1794, Lieutenant William Stewart of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot described his regiment's centenary celebrations in his diary: 'the soldiers [were] drawn out and their commanding officer addressed them on this occasion, chiefly setting forth their Loyalty and behaviour during the century that had passed and trusting they would maintain unsullied their character.'<sup>79</sup> Regimental ceremonies could carry stronger patriotic overtones. Major William Harness, although only effective as a captain with the 80<sup>th</sup> Foot on Guernsey, recorded the consecration of his regiment's colours in a 1794 letter to his wife:

The Regiment was drawn up in a square, the Field Officers mounted with Horse Furniture ... The Colours were in a Marquee near. The Adjutant brought the Colours to the Governor, the Men presented their Arms, the Governor saluted the Colours and presented them to Lord Paget. On his dismounting he saluted them, and received them most gracefully. He presented them to the Regiment, marching with one in each hand up the centre of the square, the Drums and fifes all beating a point of War and our excellent Band playing God Save the King. He gave them to the Ensigns and mounted. He began a most beautiful and manly speech by saying that the King had done him the Honor to present him with these colours; the he felt the Honor and duty of so sacred a Gift; that in executing his trust he knew he had but to present them to His Regiment, who would support them with their lives in defence of so gracious a Sovereign and in guarding the Honor, the laws, the religion and the prosperity of their country ... the whole gave three cheers, the Music and Drums struck up, the Ensigns marched with the Colours round the square, each officer saluting them as they past [sic].<sup>80</sup>

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the reciprocal relationship between regimental and individual honour was essential in binding officers to their regiments, with the bearing of the regimental colours prominent in this process. The consecration ceremony describe by Harness

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<sup>78</sup> Kennedy, 'John Bull into Battle', pp. 135-6.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Stewart, 'The Campaign in Flanders of 1793-1795: Journal of Lieutenant Charles Stewart, 28<sup>th</sup> Foot', ed. R.M. Grazebook, *Journal for the Society of Army Historical Research*, 25 (1951), p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Major William Harness, 29 May 1794, in William Harness, *Trusty and Well-Beloved: The Letters Home of William Harness, an Officer of George III*, ed. Caroline M. Duncan-Jones (London, 1957), pp. 44-5.

suggests that this reciprocity could also extend to the nation, effectively creating a compact between individuals, their regiments, and British national honour.

Investing in the honour of pan-military groups, such as the army or the navy, could also foster British patriotism. Victories and heroic conduct could flush junior officers with a sense of national and personal pride. Highlighting the overlap between military and national identities is the shared sense of honour with the success of the British navy. Lieutenant Charles Stewart of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot recorded the fervour with which the army destined for the Low Countries celebrated the 1794 British naval victory on the 'Glorious First of June':

here we beheld a scene equal to rouse the greatest drunkard, the Victorious British Fleet in its shattered state after the Glorious first of June. The Musick of each Battalion playing Rule Brittania, and the Heroick Crews by reiterated cheers animating their Brothers in War to immitate [sic] on their Element the illustrious example of British Valour that then lay anchored around them.<sup>81</sup>

Conversely, defeats or reverses could sting junior officers' honour, a response that could be measured against national opinion. Lieutenant William Bragge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons wrote to his father during the 1812 retreat from Burgos: 'I regret excessively having been obliged to recourse to this measure, which has disappointed the Expectations of England and the Hopes of Spain ... It has likewise given our Enemies an opportunity of exulting, which I could have dispensed with.'<sup>82</sup> Honour was also important in creating a sense of national belonging for national groups and individuals. The honour of being successful in a common cause could foster British unity within the army. The March 1801 landing of the British forces in Egypt included regiments which were associated with different British nations, such as the Welsh 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot, and the Highland 42<sup>nd</sup> Foot. Evans, an English officer, saw this as a bringing honour on Britain by virtue of the diverse nationalities who took part: 'I mean not to particularise any corps for bravery, as all equally alike displayed that excellent quality, the genuine excellence of Britons.'<sup>83</sup> For officers on the British periphery, military honour was closely tied to their aspirations of Britishness. In his memoir, Blakeney, an Irish Protestant officer of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot, recalled the national solidarity that emerged from the victory at the 1812 Siege of Badajoz: 'The music played was the animating national Irish air, St. Patrick's Day, when the shamrock was proudly

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<sup>81</sup> Stewart, 'The Campaign in Flanders', p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Lieutenant William Bragge, 26 Nov. 1812, in William Bragge, *Peninsular Portrait, 1811-1814: The Letters of Captain William Bragge, Third (King's Own) Dragoons*, ed. S.A.C. Cassels (London, 1963), p. 82.

<sup>83</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, 8 Mar. 1801, Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Evans, p. 105.

clustered with laurel; and indeed, though these two shrubs are not reckoned of the same family by proud collectors in the Cabinet, veteran hold them to be closely allied in the field.’<sup>84</sup>

The relationship between military and national honour was reinforced by public opinion. Avid readers of British newspapers and periodicals, junior officers were well-connected to British events and public opinion. This connection reminded officers of the national audience for their actions, reinforcing the connection between military and national honour. This connection is well demonstrated by the public scandal that greeted the 1808 Convention of Sintra, the agreement that secured the initial liberation of Portugal from the French. Following his victory at Vimeiro on 21 August 1808, Wellington was superseded by the arrival of Sir Henry Burrard and Sir Hew Dalrymple, who disallowed the pursuit of the French army.<sup>85</sup> Only nine days after his defeat at Vimeiro and in a precarious position, the French commander General Junot was able to negotiate generous terms of capitulation with the British, which formed the Convention of Sintra. The key terms saw the French army returned to France by the British navy, under arms, and carrying much of their plunder.<sup>86</sup> Cited as an important incident in the development of British romantic nationalism, the convention caused a scandal and groundswell of discontent in Britain, where government and public alike had expected a resounding victory.<sup>87</sup> The press railed against the terms given to the French, including a vitriolic pamphlet published by William Wordsworth, and the British government was forced into an investigation of the conduct of Wellington, Burrard, and Dalrymple.<sup>88</sup>

Junior officers shared in this collective sense of exasperation and responded to the terms of the convention as though they had suffered a defeat. Unlike a battle, however, where good conduct in defeat could plausibly ensure honour was maintained, veterans of Vimeiro saw the convention as a betrayal of their heroic conduct. Blakeney labelled the agreement: ‘a degrading convention, odious to all.’<sup>89</sup> Lieutenant George Wood of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot described the French army departing Lisbon in his memoir:

I saw the French army embarking for France, on board the very transports that brought us to this country ... An extraordinary sight it was; for they had their standards displayed in the square of Belem, with as much *sangfroid* as if they had

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<sup>84</sup> Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War: The Services, Adventures, and Experiences of Robert Blakeney, Subaltern in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, ed. Julian Sturgis (London, 1899), p. 260.

<sup>85</sup> Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, p. 101.

<sup>86</sup> Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>87</sup> Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1807-1815* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp. 53-4.

<sup>88</sup> For the fallout from the Convention of Sintra, see Peter Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism: War, Popular Politics, and English Radical Reformism, 1800-1815* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 73-98; Watson, *Romanticism and War*, pp. 125-32.

<sup>89</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 20.



been the victorious army ... Indeed they had some reason for considering themselves so, from the terms they made.<sup>90</sup>

In contemporary accounts, junior officers' minds quickly turned to the public response to the convention. Kinloch laid the blame with Burrard and Dalrymple in a letter to his mother, even before the news of the convention reached Britain: 'I assure you we all wish both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in command out of the way, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are liked *as much* as the other two are *disliked*. I don't know what you may be in England but here we are not at all pleased with the terms, we think we have given them much too favourable.'<sup>91</sup> Captain William Warre of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Dragoons, served as a staff officer in Portugal in 1808, and wrote to his father days after the scandal broke in Britain: 'The indignation expressed in all the English Papers at the Capitulation ... is scarce equal to what has been felt by every individual of the Army, whose glory and the gratitude of their countrymen (their best reward) has been so completely frittered away.'<sup>92</sup>

The furore surrounding the Convention of Sintra ensured that it had a lasting impact on the psyche of the British army, even for officers who were not connected to the events of 1808. Already a popular tourist destination, Sintra acquired extra fascination as the place sharing the name of the convention, although the convention itself was signed at the Palace of Queluz, nearer to Lisbon.<sup>93</sup> Lieutenant Thomas Henry Browne of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot recorded a visit to the palace in his journal: '[there] is the room in which the treaty of Cintra was signed, and they shew you a large blot of Ink upon a table, which they affirm was dashed out of the pen of the French General Kellerman.'<sup>94</sup> The convention's fame encouraged officers to reflect on its merits. These reflections were far from uniform. In his memoir, Lieutenant Moyle Sherer of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foot labelled the convention: 'a measure alike politic and expedient', while Lieutenant George Woodberry of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars merely noted in his journal that the convention was 'famous (or infamous)'.<sup>95</sup> In contrast, the dishonour associated with the Convention of Sintra could be indelible. Lieutenant George James Sullivan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, who only joined the army in 1811, pronounced his horror at the convention in his unpublished memoir. Sullivan saw the convention as a blot on British honour:

I hope ... that the convention of Cintra may be blotted out of future pages, for having a soldier's feelings, I should regret that the unfortunate transaction should ever

<sup>90</sup> George Wood, *The Subaltern Officer: A Narrative* (London, 1825), pp. 61-2.

<sup>91</sup> Lieutenant Charles Kinloch, 3 Sep. 1808, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 28.

<sup>92</sup> Captain William Warre, 29 Sep. 1808, in William Warre, *Letters from the Peninsula, 1808-1812*, ed. Edmond Warre (Memphis, TN, 2012 [1909]), p. 14.

<sup>93</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 64-6.

<sup>94</sup> Lieutenant Thomas Henry Browne, *The Napoleonic War Journal of Thomas Henry Browne: 1807-1816*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (London, 1987), p. 146.

<sup>95</sup> Moyle Sherer, *Recollections of the Peninsula* (London, 1825), p. 42.

flash across and wound the heart of a Briton, a Scotsman or a Son of Erin, when either may be sailing down the mighty Tagus, for it is here that the beautiful lands of Cintra bursts forth in all its beauty.<sup>96</sup>

The varied response to the convention in the years following its signing indicates that the dishonour associated with it was not perpetual or all permeating. The ongoing significance of the convention, however, suggests that junior officers were aware of the national importance of the events they were involved with, reinforcing the connection between military and national honour.

There are indications that the Napoleonic period altered the relationship between individual combatants and the nation, an issue that was inherently bound to the awarding of individual honours. The Napoleonic period saw European nations start to honour the contribution of individuals, regardless of rank, through the awarding of medals such as the 1802 French Legion of Honour, and the 1813 Prussian Iron Cross.<sup>97</sup> In contrast, the British army was reluctant to democratise honour: it was not until the 1816 Waterloo Medal that the British army bestowed a generally awarded decoration for an action.<sup>98</sup> For British officers the medals given to other armies were conspicuous, and even admirable. Gordon noted the awards worn by the soldiers of a distinguished French regiment during the 1808 retreat to Corunna: 'We understood the Eighth [Dragoons] was a favourite corps; it had served in all the late campaigns, and gained great credit at Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Eylau, and Friedland; several of the officers wore the Cross of the Legion of Honour; and several of the sergeants and privates bore honorary badges.'<sup>99</sup> Although the French army provided the most persistent example, other nations' decorations were also noted. Wood compared continental armies with the British: 'when I behold on the Continent the Russian, the Prussian, the Frenchman, the Spaniard, and soldiers of all nations, most of whom are decorated with these honourable badges, I certainly cannot help sighing at the scarcity of these memorable tokens of glory [in Britain].'<sup>100</sup> As shown by Karen Hagemann, Napoleonic-era medals were crucial in communicating the wearer's patriotic service to the public, and underscored their place within the nation.<sup>101</sup> Memoir sources suggest that British junior officers,

<sup>96</sup> British Library, London (hereafter BL) RP 8211, George James Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War Memoirs of Lieutenant George James Sullivan', p. 18.

<sup>97</sup> Alan Forrest, 'Citizenship, Honour, and Masculinity: Military Qualities under the French Revolution and Empire', in *Gender, War, and Politics*, pp. 94-7; Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée*, pp. 65-7; Karen Hagemann, 'National Symbols and the Politics of Memory: The Prussian Iron Cross of 1813, Its Cultural Context and Its Aftermath', in *War Memories: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture*, ed. Alan Forrest, Étienne Francois, and Karen Hagemann (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 216-7, 223-4.

<sup>98</sup> Diana Birch, Richard Bishop, and John Hayward, *British Battles and Medals*, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. (London, 2006), p. 178.

<sup>99</sup> Gordon, *A Cavalry Officer*, p. 114.

<sup>100</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern*, p. 212.

<sup>101</sup> Hagemann, 'National Symbols and the Politics of Memory', pp. 218-21.

especially those who did not receive a Waterloo medal, felt alienated from national memory as a result of the lack of British commendations. Wood emphasised the importance of physical symbols to honour culture,

It is not the intrinsic value of these baubles that makes the soldier so covetous of them ... [it is] the heartfelt satisfaction he would feel ... showing the badge of emulation and distinction to his children, his family, his friends – a badge which would entitle him to say, “Merit, like this, my boys, has supported your King, your Constitution, your laws, and your freedom; gain but these, and you will for ever secure them.”<sup>102</sup>

By arguing for individual decorations, junior officers envisaged a closer relationship between individual and national honour. Medals tied personal achievements to national honour in a mutually binding relationship. Universal decorations effectively reversed the elitism of honour culture, allowing for a greater celebration of junior officers and, possibly, common soldiers as national heroes.

### ***Fighting the Revolution***

The following two sections explore the expression of loyal and patriotic identities within the regular army, and also how these identities were affected by political and ideological developments in Britain and Europe throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The political life of the eighteenth-century British army has received little scholarly attention, despite army officers being prominent in politics: twenty per cent of Members of Parliament during the period 1790-1820 were army officers, including one in this study, Edward Charles Cocks.<sup>103</sup> This scholarly oversight may stem from the view that the presence of military MPs represented civilian control over the military, reducing the view of soldiers and officers as political actors in their own right.<sup>104</sup> While Nick Mansfield has explored the relationship between military service, political radicalism, and class during the early-nineteenth century; the majority of scholarship relating to the political views of the army has focused on its loyalty, even during periods of ideological and social tension.<sup>105</sup> Despite dislike at being used as a police force,

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<sup>102</sup> Wood, *The Subaltern*, pp. 212-3.

<sup>103</sup> John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (London, 1989), p. 45; Anthony Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years' War, 1744-1815: Enlightenment, Revolution, and Empire* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 180.

<sup>104</sup> Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, pp. 42-5.

<sup>105</sup> Nick Mansfield, 'Military Radicals and the Making of Class, 1790-1860', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of Arms*, ed. Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 57-75.

the army proved reliable when called upon to quell internal disorder.<sup>106</sup> The American War of Independence was a divisive period in British politics: loyalist MPs in favour of the status quo quarrelled with opposition Whigs who supported conciliation with American rebels, while the American struggle for political rights drove a popular push for parliamentary reform in Britain.<sup>107</sup> Stephen Conway has revealed how the political backdrop to the American War divided military opinion. During this conflict, officers' views on the conduct of the war ranged from conciliatory to 'hard-line'; as some officers advocated crushing the rebellion through coercion.<sup>108</sup> Despite these apparent schisms, Conway, Ira Gruber, and Armstrong Starkey, have all argued that political divisions had little impact on officers' individual decisions to serve in the American war. Overall, few officers absented themselves from duty, and scholars have found little evidence of British sympathy for the American rebels.<sup>109</sup> Hannah Smith and John Cookson have argued that the eighteenth-century army displayed an inclination towards national and public service which overrode political allegiances, perhaps explaining the muted political voice of the eighteenth-century army.<sup>110</sup>

The French Revolution and subsequent war with France inspired ideological debates and tensions within Britain.<sup>111</sup> Events in France gave new impetus to radical and reformist politics as the parameters of the British constitution were fervently debated in radical publications, political societies, and clubs.<sup>112</sup> Opposition politicians welcomed the initial stages of the Revolution as French steps towards British style mixed government, and argued against war with Revolutionary France on the grounds that the external threat to France was radicalising the Revolution.<sup>113</sup> As a counter to the perceived threat of French inspired radicalism, conservative opinion mobilised behind the preservation of British constitutionalism and the Anglican Church, as popular loyalist societies formed and the government moved to repress

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<sup>106</sup> Tony Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd in Mid-Georgian England* (Totowa, NJ, 1978), pp. 20-35.

<sup>107</sup> Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years' War*, pp. 180-1, 187-9.

<sup>108</sup> Stephen Conway, 'To Subdue America: British Army Officers and the Conduct of the Revolutionary War', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 43 (1986), pp. 381-407.

<sup>109</sup> Stephen Conway, 'British Army Officers and the American War for Independence', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 41 (1984), pp. 265-276; Ira Gruber, 'For King and Country: The Limits of Loyalty of British Officers in the War for American Independence', in *Limits of Loyalty*, ed. Edgar Denton III (Ontario, 1980), pp. 23-40; Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport, CT, 2003), pp. 164-5.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, 'The Army, Provincial Urban Communities, and Loyalist Cultures in England', p. 1566; Cookson, 'Service without Politics?', pp. 382-3.

<sup>111</sup> Emma Macleod has surveyed the breadth of intellectual, government, opposition, and popular opinions on the French Revolutionary War. See Emma Vincent Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars against Revolutionary France, 1792-1802* (Aldershot, 1998).

<sup>112</sup> Clive Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 29-40.

<sup>113</sup> John Derry, 'The Opposition Whigs and the French Revolution, 1789-1815', in *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*, ed. H.T. Dickinson (Basingstoke, 1989), pp. 40-6.

radical societies and thought throughout the 1790s.<sup>114</sup> The response of the British army to this ideological and political ferment remains an under-studied aspect of the British response to the French Revolution. Clive Emsley revealed isolated instances of the radicalisation of rankers and identified a handful of officers who held pro-reform or radical sympathies during 1792, including three officers who were cashiered for their political beliefs.<sup>115</sup> Emsley's analysis, however, was limited to the realm of political activity and thought within Britain, and did not extend to opinions of soldiers engaged with French Republican armies. Far from remaining politically neutral, junior officer accounts from the early and mid-1790s reveal their ardent loyalism, as they were horrified by the perceived threat of republican ideology to European society. With ideological considerations at the fore, British officers saw themselves in a conflict with republicanism as much as with the French army, echoing the school of British 'war crusaders' identified by Emma Macleod.<sup>116</sup>

Although primary source material for the Revolutionary period is sparse in comparison to the Napoleonic period, the existing sources suggest that the French republic embodied principles and actions that were anathema to junior officers' view of society. This view applied to Revolution after its radicalisation, and contrasts with evidence the suggestion that officers were sympathetic to the Revolution's early stages. Lieutenant David Powell of the 14<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons saw republicanism and regicide as subverting the progress of the French state towards enlightened monarchy: 'they had destroyed with their king, a mild, beneficent monarchy, gradually advancing to a wise & liberal reform of abuses & were now under the dominion of one the horriddest regimes that the page of history gives an account of.'<sup>117</sup> Inherent in junior officers' criticisms was a belief in the institutions of European monarchies. Serving in the Low Countries in 1794, Lieutenant Charles Stewart of the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot recorded that republican ideology had undermined the authority of the stadtholder, William V of Orange. Stewart noting that the: 'pulse of the people to the allied cause ... was completely hostile, there were some few instances expected of firm attachment to the House of Orange.'<sup>118</sup> Junior officers viewed the spread of French republicanism and its values of liberty, equality, and anti-clericalism as a threat to European society and culture, particularly the order and stability provided by social hierarchies.<sup>119</sup> Escorting French prisoners after the mid-1793 Siege of Valenciennes, Thomas

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<sup>114</sup> Frank O'Gorman, 'Pitt and the Tory Reaction to the French Revolution, 1789-1815', in Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 29-30; Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 30-40.

<sup>115</sup> Clive Emsley, 'Political Disaffection and the British Army in 1792', *Historical Research*, 48 (1975), pp. 234-44.

<sup>116</sup> Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, pp. 65-89.

<sup>117</sup> National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter, 'NLI') Ms. 1577, Lieutenant David Powell, 'Some Account of a Campaign in 1794', pp. 23-4.

<sup>118</sup> Stewart 'The Campaign in Flanders', p. 15.

<sup>119</sup> Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 17-20; O'Gorman, 'Pitt and the Tory Reaction', pp. 30-40; Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, pp. 73-4.

Powell was amazed at the discipline of the French soldiers, given their officers' background: '[they] looked very ragged & ill, but rather well disciplined, which appeared very extraordinary to us, as their officers were selected from the most black-guard part of their privates & one or two negroes amongst the officers that commanded Divisions.'<sup>120</sup> Fighting against the slave revolt on Saint Domingue in 1797, Lieutenant Thomas Howard of the York Hussars was abhorred at the French emancipation of slavery: 'the Negroes on the different Plantations through the Islands immediately shook of[f] the Yoke of Allegiance they owed to their masters.'<sup>121</sup>

During the ideologically charged Revolutionary period, with debates over the nature of British society and constitution raging, British officers had a vested interest in maintaining the social status quo. This likely strengthened their anti-Revolutionary sentiments. In 1792, the British officer corps was a small cadre of 3, 107 officers drawn from a relatively narrow social base, and whose authority over the rank and file was founded on the hierarchical structure of British society.<sup>122</sup> Naturally, junior officers feared the implications of egalitarianism for their own authority. Describing the abortive 1793 expedition in aid of French Royalists forces in western France, Stewart attributed the expeditions failure to the influence of republicanism on the Royalist army: 'it was said there reigned in the army of the Royalist that spirit of equality so destructive of good order and Military Discipline; their chiefs were even afraid to ... lead them to the coast lest should the British forces not that moment be in sight they might fall victims to the fury of their Soldiers, as men who designed to betray them.'<sup>123</sup> These concerns could be transferred to the British forces. David Powell feared that British soldiers would be seduced by French meritocracy: 'considering the crisis we were at & the temper of the times it is miraculous how our armies could have been led on to fight against principles of so flattering & insidious a nature as that of the general cry Liberty & Equality.'<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, junior officers saw egalitarianism as a byword for violence, destruction, and chaos. David Powell commented that the French had: 'under the name of a Republic ... brought on the most frightful of anarchies: the destruction of the sacred principles of religion, or order of police ... daringly covering their hideous misdeeds under the name of Liberty & Equality.'<sup>125</sup> In Holland during 1793, Thomas Powell recorded meeting a village curate who had spent three weeks hiding his family from the French in a church vault: 'Had they been seen, it was certain

<sup>120</sup> NAM 1796-07-45, Powell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Powell', p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Howard, *The Haitian Journal of Lieutenant Howard, York Hussars, 1796-1798*, ed. Roger Norman Buckley (Knoxville, TN, 1985), p. 77.

<sup>122</sup> Michael Glover, *Wellington's Army*, p. 36.

<sup>123</sup> Stewart, 'The Campaign in Flanders', p. 6.

<sup>124</sup> NLI Ms. 1577, Powell, 'Some Account of a Campagne', p. 109.

<sup>125</sup> NLI Ms., 1577, Powell, 'Some Account of a Campagne', pp. 111-2.

death, as the French at that time, gave no quarter to clergy.<sup>126</sup> Howard believed that the sudden liberty given to slaves by the French Republic encouraged violent revolt. Howard described the slave uprising on Saint Domingue: 'it was that the French Revolution in Europe was acted over again in the Colonies in Miniature: Murder, Assassination, Rape & Robbery was the order of the day.'<sup>127</sup> Racial prejudice and familiarity with the cruel treatment of slaves also informed Howard's reading of the slave revolt: 'As revenge is the ruling Passion of a Negro, & as I am much Afraid cause sufficient existed from the inhumanity of some Whites to their Slaves, the whole island was immediately filled with Murder & Atrocities.'<sup>128</sup> Although his reading of the revolt was shaped by his racial views and his awareness of the treatment of slaves, Howard still saw the sudden liberty awarded to slaves as allowing violence to erupt. Howard finally noted: 'in fact Language wants words to Express the Enormities committed in honor of the *Rights of Man*.'<sup>129</sup> In addition to violence against people, British officers saw the chaos of the republic as damaging European culture and the values of European politeness.<sup>130</sup> Having visited Antwerp Cathedral in 1794 and viewed artworks by Dutch masters, Stewart noted in his diary: 'Melancholy to reflect, the collection of ages were a few days after swept off by the rude hands of savage Barbarians and sent into the Kingdom of discord and rebellion.'<sup>131</sup>

Criticisms of the British government and war effort, even after sustained periods of military underperformance, are notably absent from sources contemporary to the Revolutionary period, suggesting that even mild critiques of the established order were incongruent with junior officers' loyalist identities. This stands in contrast to sources from the Napoleonic period, where officers saw critiques of the war effort as compatible with their patriotic identities. Up until the successful 1801 Egyptian campaign, Britain's war with Revolutionary France was characterised by failure moderated only by British naval security: military expeditions to the continent met with disaster; the British army in the West Indies was defeated by slave insurrection and disease; and financially draining coalitions with European powers collapsed.<sup>132</sup> These setbacks do not appear to have encouraged junior officers to offer criticisms of the war effort, an absence which may be attributed to the principles of conservative loyalism, which advocated support for the Pitt administration.<sup>133</sup> In April 1801, Lieutenant Thomas Evans of the 8<sup>th</sup> Foot reflected in his diary on Pitt the Younger's resignation and the ascent of the Addington administration. Evans feared this would bring peace with the French Directory:

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<sup>126</sup> NAM 1976-07-45, Powell, 'Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Powell', p. 19.

<sup>127</sup> Howard, *The Haitian Journal*, p. 78.

<sup>128</sup> Howard, *The Haitian Journal*, p. 78.

<sup>129</sup> Howard, *The Haitian Journal*, p. 78.

<sup>130</sup> Conway, *Britain Ireland, and Continental Europe*, pp. 130-4.

<sup>131</sup> Stewart, 'The Campaign in Flanders', p. 11.

<sup>132</sup> Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years' War*, pp. 46-51.

<sup>133</sup> Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, pp. 72-89.

The change of ministers at home has been received ... with sorrow and surprise, for under all our country's reverses heretofore, we had at least the consolation of knowing it to be governed by an able, patriotic and personally ... disinterested [man], 'twould in my mind, with such a man, be better to nobly struggle with the storms of fate, and greatly fall with a falling state, or by a noble contention against regicide usurpers and atheistical principles, to set our country out of the reach of danger, and place her in the proud attitude, to defend, and assert the general freedom of mankind, by leaving to the disturbers of it, as their only alternative, the reverting back to their former state of peace, and social order.<sup>134</sup>

Junior officers' antipathy to republican ideology likely made conservative loyalist discourses broadly appealing, however, more liberal minded officers may also have found it difficult to critique the war effort while appearing loyal. As emphasised by David Bindman and John Moores, the French Revolution was primarily interpreted in Britain through the lens of British politics and society, with revolutionary ideology projected onto domestic oppositional and reformist figures.<sup>135</sup> This projection contributed to a habitual distrust of reformist politics, which. As revealed by Philip Harling, this made it near impossible for loyalists to articulate criticisms of the government or war effort, lest their loyalty be called into question.<sup>136</sup>

Junior officers' loyalism to the established social order is relatively apparent from their appraisals of the dangers of republican ideology, yet expressions of patriotism are harder to locate. It was not a certainty that junior officers would equate their loyalism with patriotism: patriotic language had been appropriated by a wide range of political voices during the eighteenth-century, including reformists and radicals.<sup>137</sup> By the late-eighteenth century, however, loyalism and patriotism were coming into closer alignment. As demonstrated by Colley, George III strengthened the bond between the monarchy and British national identity.<sup>138</sup> Marilyn Morris has demonstrated how a participatory loyalist culture built up around George III during the Revolutionary period, encouraging the conflation of loyalism and patriotism.<sup>139</sup> As demonstrated by Eric Evans, this view of patriotic loyalism also extended to loyalty to Pitt the Younger and his conservative government.<sup>140</sup> From 1795 onwards, after the Jacobin terror had

<sup>134</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, 23 Apr. 1801, Diary of Lieutenant Thomas Evans, p. 130.

<sup>135</sup> David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London, 1989), p. 27; John Moores, *Representations of France*, pp. 163-6.

<sup>136</sup> Philip Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts: Critiques of the British War Effort, 1793-1815', in Mark Philip (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 22-33.

<sup>137</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.5; McCormack, *The Independent Man*, pp. 140-2.

<sup>138</sup> Linda Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty, and the British Nation, 1760-1820', *Past & Present*, 102 (1984), pp. 94-129; McCormack, *The Independent Man*, p. 149.

<sup>139</sup> Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (New Haven, CT, 1998), pp. 141-59.

<sup>140</sup> Eric J. Evans, *William Pitt the Younger* (London, 1999), pp. 59-61.



subsided and the prospect of French invasion loomed, junior officers began to think of war in more patriotic terms, although these views were still coloured by anti-Republicanism.<sup>141</sup> Evans' description of Pitt as a patriotic leader, and his equation of the war with Revolutionary France as a patriotic endeavour: 'to set our country out of the reach of danger'; suggests that Evans saw support for the government and the war as distinctly patriotic.<sup>142</sup> Concerns over French territorial expansion figure more prominently in accounts from the late-1790s. Howard saw the emancipation of West Indian slaves as a tool for extending French colonial power: 'thinking that an infinitely more secure way of maintaining the Colonies in their Interest than if they had given any further encouragement to the White Inhabitants ... by politically bestowing so great a Gift as Freedom to these People, they judged they should always be able to maintain a decided Superiority.'<sup>143</sup> Reflecting on the failed 1799 campaign in Holland, Evans described Britain's efforts as an expedition: 'in the cause of rational freedom ... altho' defeated by French perfidy and intrigue [it] will ever remain a moment of virtue, disinterestedness, and greatness of soul.'<sup>144</sup> Loyalism allowed for the development of patriotic identities in seemingly unlikely candidates, such as Peter Jennings, the sole Irish Catholic officer in this study. As highlighted previously, the relationship between national and personal honour allowed Jennings to identify with Britain. It was Jennings' loyalism; however, which directed him into the British service. Jennings highlighted his loyalty to the French monarchy during the French Revolution, describing Republicanism as a 'horrible conspiracy' which extended a 'harmful influence' over the French people.<sup>145</sup> Jennings' desire to combat the Revolution led him into the Irish Brigade in the British service, and after the Irish Brigade's disbandment, into the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot in 1798. Describing his joining the 28<sup>th</sup>, Jennings conflated his desire to fight in 'a just & lawful War' with British patriotism: 'it was not my wish ... to remain an idle member of the community at a time particularly when the dearest interests of the Country were at stake.'<sup>146</sup>

### ***Fighting Napoleon***

The evolution in junior officers' patriotic expression that can be detected from the late-1790s continued throughout the Napoleonic period. Particularly after the 1803 invasion scare, the 'Black Legend' surrounding Napoleon provoked a strong emotional response regarding the defence of Britain as a place, as Napoleon provided junior officers with an enduring and

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<sup>141</sup> Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, p. 75; Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, p. 213.

<sup>142</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 23 Apr. 1801, p. 130.

<sup>143</sup> Howard, *The Haitian Journal*, p. 77.

<sup>144</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 11 Nov. 1799, pp. 28-9.

<sup>145</sup> NAM 1983-01-102, Jennings, 'Diary of Peter R. Jennings'.

<sup>146</sup> NAM 1983-01-102, Jennings, *Diary of Peter R. Jennings*.

ominous figure to project their fears of French invasion onto. The broadening effect of invasion scares is tempered, however, by the continued use of 'England' as a description of their homeland by English officers, suggesting that 'Britishness' did not necessarily become the primary national identity for English officers. From 1803 onwards, junior officers saw intervention in Europe as a patriotic act, as they conflated the cause of European liberation with the defence of Britain. Napoleon's image in British culture was central to this relationship, as junior officers perceived Napoleon as a tyrant, desirous of conquering Europe, including Britain. Invasion scares occurred during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period; however, the way they were interpreted in British culture differed. As shown by Alexandra Franklin, visual satires during the 1798 invasion scare projected invasion fears onto British domestic politics, using fear of the French to attack opposition Whigs or the Pitt administration.<sup>147</sup> In contrast, visual satires produced during the invasion scare of 1803 focused on the conflict between the non-partisan figure of 'John Bull', and Napoleon, encouraging the view that war with France transcended politics.<sup>148</sup> To counter the potentially sympathetic view of Napoleon as a self-made ruler, loyalist publications portrayed Napoleon as a vain despot who sought to oppress Britain, and suggested that Napoleon's alleged atrocities on his campaigns in Italy, Syria, and Egypt would be visited on Britain if the French invaded.<sup>149</sup> Stuart Semmel has argued that the British response to Napoleon in 1803 struck a patriotic chord as loyalist discourses focused on the universal suffering that would occur from a French invasion, reinforcing a sense of national, if not social, unity.<sup>150</sup> This image of Napoleon was particularly durable amongst junior officers. By exploring children's play during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, Kathryn Gleadle has demonstrated how growing up during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars shaped the loyal and patriotic identities of adults.<sup>151</sup> The officers in this study were overwhelmingly young, ensuring that many of the junior officers who fought against Napoleon had grown up knowing only a world where Britain and France were at war, which may have made them particularly susceptible to anti-Napoleonic propaganda.

Contemporary accounts suggest that junior officers were influenced by many aspects of the Napoleonic 'Black Legend' during wartime. The extent of Napoleon's dominion over Europe, and especially his conquest of Spain, confirmed the image of Napoleon as a tyrant and the belief that war with Napoleon was a war for European liberty. French allies until 1808, Napoleon's

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<sup>147</sup> Alexandra Franklin 'John Bull in a Dream: Fear and Fantasy in the Visual Satires of 1803', in *Resisting Napoleon*, p. 128.

<sup>148</sup> Franklin 'John Bull in a Dream', pp. 128-9.

<sup>149</sup> Stuart Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven, CT, 2004), pp. 44-6; Simon Burrows, 'Britain and the Black Legend: The Genesis of the Anti-Napoleon Myth', in *Resisting Napoleon*, pp. 143-6.

<sup>150</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, pp. 45-6, 57-8. Also see Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, p. 213.

<sup>151</sup> Kathryn Gleadle, 'Playing at Soldiers: British Loyalism and Juvenile Identities during the Napoleonic Wars', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2015), pp. 335-46.

attempted conquest of Spain sparked a national uprising, as Madrid revolted against the French occupation on 2 May.<sup>152</sup> This uprising was met with widespread enthusiasm in Britain. The British public and politicians of all stripes latched onto the cause of Spanish patriotism in the face of foreign despotism at a time of otherwise pessimism over the war effort. A British force dispatched to Portugal on 12 July.<sup>153</sup> Warre, an officer with the 1808 expedition, was invigorated before his departure for Portugal. Warre wrote to his father:

The Army are in the highest spirits; indeed the cause we are engaged in is the noblest a soldier could wish, and to support the liberties and independence of a country so lately our enemy. To forget all animosity and cordially join against the common enemy of Europe, the would-be Tyrant of the world, is worthy of the British name; and a soldier's heart must be cold indeed that would not warm with enthusiasm in such a cause... May God assist the Right. It may be the crisis of the Tyrant's power. If he fails now, it may open the eyes of Europe.<sup>154</sup>

Although the zeal which accompanied the initial stages of the Peninsular War abated, the image of Napoleon as a cruel tyrant endured amongst junior officers. In a March 1814 letter to his sister, Captain Charles Kinloch, a Scottish officer in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, expressed his fears for French Royalists who welcomed the British into Bordeaux: 'It is most sincerely to be hoped that their good people will not at some future period suffer for their loyalty. In the event of a peace with Buonaparte their position will be most lamentable.'<sup>155</sup> As Napoleon's return from exile put paid to his retirement plans, a Scottish officer in the 79<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, Captain John Sinclair, lamented to his sister: 'alas how soon are all my fine prospects and flattering hopes blasted, by the escape of that Destroyer [sic] of mankind, who has so easily again obtained possession of the Throne of France ... also sorry am I to say that we are again to commence the war.'<sup>156</sup>

Napoleon's personal character, particularly his supposed vanity and hubris, was a favoured topic of officers, even during the French Consulate. Visiting an Egyptian village in 1801 that had previously been stormed by Napoleon, Evans reflected on the village's earlier visitor:

This is the village which Buonaparte ... mentions as being so valiantly stormed by the Republicans. God knows how little capable of defence is this said village ... but it being about the time of the defeat of his fleet in Aboukir Bay, Buonaparte might

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<sup>152</sup> Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>153</sup> Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, pp. 37-43; Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, pp. 64-7.

<sup>154</sup> Captain William Warre, 8 Jun. 1808, in Warre, *Letters from the Peninsula*, p. 6.

<sup>155</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 20 Mar. 1814, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 194.

<sup>156</sup> National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter, NRS), GD 139-369, Lieutenant John Sinclair, 28 Mar. 1815.

perhaps intend his pompous account of the victorious career of the French arms from Alexandria to Rosetta as a kind of set off against that of the glorious Nelson.<sup>157</sup>

In the wake of Waterloo, Lieutenant Orlando Bridgeman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards speculated in a letter to his mother that the soldiers who captured Napoleon's carriage: 'found many bulletins & proclamations dated from his imperial palace at Brussels, so confident was he of success.'<sup>158</sup> Stationed in Paris in July 1815, Ensign Robert Bakewell of the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot visited various monuments to French victories, but especially noted Napoleon's self-promotion: 'the letters "N.B." are placed in the most public positions ... for the buildings were scarcely consider'd to be complete without being adorned.'<sup>159</sup> Napoleon's self-aggrandisement was central to how British officers understood the war, as they attributed the destruction of warfare to Napoleon's unrelenting ambition. Keep wrote to his mother from southern France in late-1813: 'How strange it appears that all these horrors should arise from the ambition of an individual, when he himself might his "quietus make with a bare bodkin", an acre of ground suffice to maintain him, and a few feet of it to hide his remains.'<sup>160</sup> Upon hearing of Napoleon's return from exile in 1815, Kinloch wrote to his mother: 'The question of peace or war now seems to be whether the French nation will fight for Buonaparte. It is hardly possible to conceive that the government would sacrifice so many thousand lives merely for the person of one man.'<sup>161</sup>

For officers who witnessed the effects of warfare on Europe, it was not difficult to imagine the same occurring in Britain. Describing a series of French atrocities against Spanish civilians in the Peninsula in his journal, Lieutenant George Simmons drew on anti-Napoleonic discourse to describe his feelings: 'O happy England! surrounded by an element over which thy sons in their wooden walls triumphantly sway, and on thy happy shores the arms of that tyrant who has deluged Europe in blood can have no influence. May it ever be so is my earnest prayer!'<sup>162</sup>

Visiting Copenhagen after its surrender to British forces in September 1807 following a six-day bombardment, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot wrote to his father: 'To have War in your own country is a most dreadful thing. With what cheerfulness the English ought to pay their taxes to keep them from such a burden. I never saw such destruction.'<sup>163</sup> This call to patriotism allowed for the blurring of intervention in Europe with the defence of Britain.

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<sup>157</sup> NAM 1995-09-101, Lieutenant Thomas Evans, diary, 19 Apr. 1801, pp. 126-7.

<sup>158</sup> Lieutenant Orlando Bridgeman, 21 Jun. 1815, in Bridgeman, *A Young Gentleman at War*, p. 178.

<sup>159</sup> NAM 1975-09-75, Diary of Robert Bakewell, Vol. II, p. 59.

<sup>160</sup> Lieutenant William Thornton Keep, 28 Dec. 1813, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 195.

<sup>161</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 18 Apr. 1815, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, pp. 211-2.

<sup>162</sup> Lieutenant George Simmons, journal, 6 Mar. 1811, in George Simmons, *A British Rifleman: Journals and Correspondence during the Peninsular War and the Campaign of Wellington*, ed. Willoughby Verner (London, 1986), p. 138.

<sup>163</sup> NAM 1980-08-56, Lieutenant John Christopher Harrison, 8 Sep. 1807.

Writing his diary from Copenhagen, Captain Charles Pasley of the Royal Engineers, recalled defending the British assault on Copenhagen to a Danish baron and his family:

We told them that as individuals we were mere instruments, that we regretted very much having had hostilities with the Danes, but we believed our Government had sufficient & certain intelligence of the designs of France to render this violent measure necessary an act of necessity ... we always tell them that the Fortune of War varies, and that we should not at all be surprised to see our enemy in England.<sup>164</sup>

This is not to suggest that British officers had unwavering support for the cause of European liberty. Daly has revealed how the early enthusiasm for Spanish liberation dissipated during the Peninsular War, as British soldiers believed their efforts in Spain, especially between 1808 and 1810, went unappreciated.<sup>165</sup> Enthusiasm for the cause of Spanish patriotism was not necessary for British officers to realise the value of maintaining a European front against Napoleon. Lamenting Spanish infighting and the lack of support given to the British, Cocks wrote to his brother in late-1809: 'But are we here for motives purely disinterested or because the interests of Spain and England tend towards the same centre? Certainly from the latter cause. Therefore, however untoward and irritating these circumstances may be, we should not be lukewarm in fighting and exerting ourselves for England.'<sup>166</sup>

Emblematic of how the external threat posed by Napoleon broadened the scope of patriotism within the British army was the diversity of political discussion that occurred at the lowest levels of the officer corps. The topic of how the nation's interests were best served became a matter of debate. In contrast to the Revolutionary period, where fears over republican ideology fostered a conservative patriotism that made junior officers reluctant to criticise the government, the Napoleonic period saw officers criticising governments or embracing reformist ideas in their hopes of improving the war effort. These developments coincided with a thawing of the political atmosphere in Britain from 1805.<sup>167</sup> Then an ensign with the 48<sup>th</sup> Foot, Crowe's description of a Northampton lawyer who attempted to have a fellow officer arrested as: 'a violent Whig, fond of finding fault with government and everything therewith connected. A complaint against the military was consequently quite to his taste'; suggests that oppositional politics were seen by some officers as unpatriotic.<sup>168</sup> Highlighting the breadth of thought within the army are rare instances of officers who were sympathetic to oppositional political views.

<sup>164</sup> BL Add. Ms. 41975, Captain Charles Pasley, 26 Sep. 1807, 'The Pasley Papers, Vol. XV'.

<sup>165</sup> Daly, *The British Soldier in the Peninsular War*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>166</sup> Captain Edward Charles Cocks, 18 Oct. 1809, in Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>167</sup> J.R. Dinwiddy, *Radicalism and Reform in Britain 1780-1850* (London, 1992), pp. 208-9.

<sup>168</sup> Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier*, p. 14.

Citing the high cost or futility of war with Napoleon, opposition politicians argued for a withdrawal from the continent to fight a defensive war, or to sue for peace with France.<sup>169</sup> Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards, a future Whig MP, was routinely pessimistic about the war in the Peninsula and the Perceval government in his letters home. Mills suggested in an 1811 letter to his mother that Britain was best served avoiding continental intervention: 'we shall be told ... that in the end the French must be beat. More money must be granted to carry on the expense of the war and England must be drained to support it. At the end of a few years, people will open their eyes and see they have been humbugged.'<sup>170</sup>

Between these two poles were officers who were critical of the way war with Napoleon was conducted, reflecting the emergence of loyalist critiques of the war effort in Britain from 1805.<sup>171</sup> Military debacles could provoke criticism of the government's handling of the war. Suffering from fever during the last days of the catastrophic 1809 Walcheren campaign, Keep wrote to his mother in the hope that the government and Lord Chatham, the expedition's commander, would face consequences for the failure: 'I hope we shall hear the talk of a change of Ministry confirmed by the next arrivals, and that Lord Chatham's trial has commenced, but his acquittal seems certain, and although he is much laughed at he is not blamed.'<sup>172</sup> Having read the accounts of the disastrous siege of Burgos and subsequent retreat into Portugal in the British newspapers, Lieutenant John Aitchison of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards wrote to his father in December 1812:

I am glad however to notice that the blame is generally thrown upon the *Ministry*, not on the general and the army ... The Ministry are accused of impolicy in not providing sufficient means of transport – the accusation *is just* ... They are accused too of unnecessary delay in sending reinforcements after the battle of Salamanca – this is so clearly just, as I think must damn their capacity for conducting a vigorous (which in the end is the most economical) war – they have forfeited the confidence of the world by it and I only hope will receive its *reward* in being dismissed.<sup>173</sup>

For Aitchison, therefore, criticising the government was not only congruent with his patriotic identity, but the full expression of it.

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<sup>169</sup> John Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 180-5.

<sup>170</sup> Ensign John Mills, 3 Sep. 1811, in John Mills, *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811-14*, ed. Ian Fletcher (Staplehurst, 1995), p. 66.

<sup>171</sup> Harling, 'A Tale of Two Conflicts', pp. 33-7.

<sup>172</sup> Ensign William Thornton Keep, 24 Sep. 1809, in Keep, *In the Service of the King*, p. 65.

<sup>173</sup> Lieutenant John Aitchison, 24 Dec. 1812, in John Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison*, ed. W.F.K. Thompson (London, 1981), p. 222.

The space provided for criticism of the government also invited radical critiques of government and society, which viewed the war effort as not just being mishandled, but undermined by the corruption of the British elite. Peter Spence has demonstrated how a potent strand of 'romantic radicalism' had emerged in Britain by 1807.<sup>174</sup> This political movement expressed its patriotism through support for the monarchy and the war against France, but saw the war effort as directly connected to national virtue. Radicals argued for an end to political corruption, and for military and parliamentary reform to invigorate the war effort.<sup>175</sup> Military and public scandals, such as the Convention of Sintra and the 1809 Duke of York scandal, where it emerged that York's mistress had accepted bribes to expedite promotions, strengthened the argument that the British elite was inherently corrupt.<sup>176</sup> As a result of their military experiences, some junior officers could become sympathetic to reformist or radical ideals, ideals which were a direct product of junior officers' relatively low status in the military hierarchy: officers could become embittered towards the influence of patronage and wealth in obtaining promotions for well-connected officers, particularly on the part of officers who felt their merit was unrecognised. Complaints over aristocratic corruption of promotions could politicise junior officers, who saw military reform as a vehicle for criticising the establishment. This is demonstrated by the case of Captain Henry Foscett of the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars. As the senior captain with the 15<sup>th</sup> in 1806, Foscett was blocked from having the regulated first opportunity of purchasing a vacant majority in the regiment by the Duke of Cumberland, the 15<sup>th</sup>'s nominal commander and the eighth son of George III. Foscett alleged that Cumberland had accepted bribes to ensure that officers from outside the regiment succeeded to the vacancies.<sup>177</sup> After having an initial request for a report into Cumberland's actions under the *Articles of War* blocked by Cumberland and the Duke of York, Foscett unsuccessfully petitioned the House of Commons, before publishing his complaints in the 1810 pamphlet, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated*. In this pamphlet, Foscett attacked Cumberland and York for subverting the rule of law and abusing their privileged position: 'The regular channels through which he was entitled to approach the Throne, has been closed to him ... by a gross violation of the Articles of War, and by an actual invasion of the Royal Prerogative.'<sup>178</sup> Cumberland and York's circumvention of junior officers' legal means of redress, argued Foscett, made his affair one of professional and individual rights in the face of overbearing control by superior officers. Foscett stated that Cumberland and York had deprived: 'this important and numerous class of men their only bulwark against oppression

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<sup>174</sup> Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, pp. 34-49.

<sup>175</sup> Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, pp. 46-9.

<sup>176</sup> Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, pp. 86-98, 109-28; Philip Harling, 'The Duke of York Affair (1809) and the Complexities of War-Time Patriotism', *The Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), pp. 963-84.

<sup>177</sup> Henry Foscett, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated; in an Appeal to the Public, on the Case of Captain Foscett* (London, 1810), pp. vii-xxxviii.

<sup>178</sup> Foscett, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated*, p. viii.

from their Military superiors ... At that moment the case of Captain Foskett assumed an entirely new character. It was no longer a case of mere individual oppression, but one in which the whole army had a deep interest.'<sup>179</sup>

Officers who were critical of the elite leadership of the British army could project their criticisms onto a national canvas. Critical officers viewed their concerns over military efficacy and the rights of the military's constituent members as converging with a wider debate over the rights of British citizens and national welfare. Lieutenant George James Sullivan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards saw the personal corruption of his regiment's aristocratic leader, Major Camac, as symptomatic of a national malaise. In his unpublished memoir, Sullivan portrayed Camac as the epitome of aristocratic vice. In Sullivan's account, Camac engaged in petty disputes with his subordinates; convened courts martial on which he gave evidence and provided judgement; entered into arguments with Sullivan over the affections of a maid; and incompetently led his regiment into the field after obtaining his rank through political connections.<sup>180</sup> Sullivan saw Camac's promotion as auguring ill for Britain:

I blush for my Country. If Merit is to be buried in oblivion and interest to lead such Heroes as Major Camac to the Field –“good bye then say I Britain, thy days of Gloy will be *but short*” ... Is it then proper to promote such men because they are the sons of Peers, and men of high rank or fortune? It is a shame to entail such disgrace upon a nation!!<sup>181</sup>

For Foskett, his mistreatment at the hands of superiors raised questions about whether the British elite had undermined constitutional safeguards:

his complaints were no longer confined to wrongs inflicted in the course of Military service, but involved a charge against a person in a high official situation, of breach of duty and abuse of power; - as they imputed to that person an act, not only tending to deprive the whole Army of the protection afforded it by law, against injustice and oppression, but amounting to a direct and absolute denial of justice, and thereby affecting the dearest rights of the subject, as explained and established by the great Charter of British Liberty.<sup>182</sup>

Without protection for personal rights, Foskett suggested that the: 'British army would be better qualified to fight under the banners of an ambitious tyrant ... than those of A MILD AND

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<sup>179</sup> Foskett, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated*, p. 8.

<sup>180</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War', pp. 5-8, 22-4.

<sup>181</sup> BL RP 8211, Sullivan, 'The Peninsular War', p. 24.

<sup>182</sup> Foskett, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated*, p. 9.



BENEFICIENT SOVERGEIN, MAGNANIMOUSLY CONTENDING FOR THE STABILITY OF HIS THRONE, THE SECURITY OF HIS PEOPLE, AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD.’<sup>183</sup>

In criticising the establishment, Foskett and Sullivan demonstrated how far notions of patriotism within the British officer corps had evolved during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Their Revolutionary-era predecessor’s spooked by the threat of republicanism, would have found such strident criticism of the British government inconceivable. By advocating for specifically *British* rights, rather than the rights of the English, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish, they also demonstrate the capacity of the British armed forces to consolidate an overarching British national identity. Through a mix of cultural recognition, sharing of honour, and war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, the melting-pot of the British army provided a sense of British commonality.

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<sup>183</sup> Foskett, *The Rights of the Army Vindicated*, p. 9.

## Conclusion: Memory and Medals

Napoleon's return from his first exile in February 1815 sparked a renewed crisis, as 'The Hundred Days' threw doubt on the future state of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Despite the strident anti-Napoleonic sentiments which are present in their accounts, not all junior British officers were distraught at the idea of fighting Napoleon again. Facing slow promotion or demobilisation in the peacetime army, Lieutenant George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards wrote candidly to a friend that the resumption of hostilities might be a boon for his stalled career: 'Selfishly speaking I ought to pray for a campaign, as my only chance of promotion ... but you will have so bad an opinion of my patriotism that I shall not venture to say what I wish for.'<sup>2</sup> The allied victory at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815 was characterised by particularly intense fighting, with 50,000 men dying in a single day within a compact battlefield.<sup>3</sup> In the days that followed, junior officers who fought at Waterloo came to the realisation that they had been a part of a decisive and monumental event. The day after the battle, Bowles wrote to the same friend:

I congratulate you heartily as I know you would me on the glorious (though dearly earned) laurels of yesterday; a day which will always stand proudly pre-eminent in the annals of the British army. A more desperate, and probably a more important, battle for the interest of Europe has hardly occurred even during the great events of the last three campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

Officers who were not involved at the battle were similarly ecstatic at the news of the victory. Captain Charles Kinloch of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot wrote to his mother from his barracks as the news broke in Britain: 'The fall of the tyrant has been as rapid as his last rise & how perfectly visible throughout the whole, is the hand of divine providence!'<sup>5</sup>

Bowles and Kinloch's initial elation soon gave way, as both served with the army of occupation in Paris throughout the remainder of 1815 and into 1816. The outlook for junior army officers in the post-war period was bleak. Keen to reduce government expenditure, the British demobilised 100,000 soldiers in 1816, followed by another 32,000 soldiers and sailors the

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey of 'The Hundred Days', see Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1807-1815* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp. 343-73.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 18 Mar. 1815, in George Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo: The Letters of Captain George Bowles, Coldstream Guards, 1808-1819*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2008), p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon*, p. 363.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 19 Jun. 1815, in Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo*, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 30 Jun. 1815, in Charles Kinloch, *A Hellish Business: The Letters of Captain Charles Kinloch, 52<sup>nd</sup> Light infantry, 1806-16*, ed. Gareth Glover (Huntingdon, 2007), p. 218.

following year.<sup>6</sup> As regiments had their second and third battalions disbanded, the junior officers who served in these additional battalions were placed on half-pay - still paid at the 1714 pay rate - while those who remained faced slow promotion rates and the potential for long service in an overseas garrison.<sup>7</sup> While some of the officers in this study managed to persevere with their careers beyond these demobilisations, half of the surviving officers in this study had left the army by the end of 1820. Within this context, Kinloch was not optimistic about his prospects. Kinloch wrote home from France in October 1815 that he and his brother, who served in the same regiment, would soon be without a career: 'I think it very likely the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion will be reduced in a month or so, & my father will have the two broken soldiers back upon his hands.'<sup>8</sup> After remaining with the army of occupation for the winter, Kinloch was eventually placed on half-pay in mid-1816. Bowles fared better than Kinloch and retired as a general in 1843, yet he was despondent about the state of Britain in the aftermath of war. As Britain was gripped by economic depression and political radicalism threatened the political and social status quo, Bowles expressed his concern: 'I cannot help shuddering at what a few years' peace may do in England. The rapid growth of Methodism, the encouragement of which is now interwoven with the Opposition system, by making the lower classes conceive themselves ... superior to the upper, must have a decidedly bad political effect.'<sup>9</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed, veterans of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars reflected on the meaning of the wars in British culture in their memoirs, and took a keen interest in how the combatants who served in the various campaigns of the wars were remembered. Junior officers' concepts of glory were grounded in memory. Being remembered and acknowledged for having patriotically served the nation was the standard by which glory was measured. As demonstrated by Catriona Kennedy, the Battle of Waterloo assumed a dominant position in the post-war narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, as artistic and literary depictions of the battle abounded.<sup>10</sup> In the post-war decades, junior officers eagerly campaigned for their share of the glory surrounding Waterloo. In his revised diary, Lieutenant Charles Crowe of the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot, or 'Inniskillings', argued that histories of Waterloo were unfavourably balanced to a few notable regiments: 'the little gallant band of Enniskilleners

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army: Recruitment, Society and Tradition, 1807-1815* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 129; Norman Gash, 'After Waterloo: British Society and the Legacy of the Napoleonic Wars', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 28 (1978), p. 147.

<sup>7</sup> Gash, 'After Waterloo', p. 147; Jay Luvaas, *The Education of an Army: British Military Thought, 1815-1940* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1964), pp. 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Captain Charles Kinloch, 2 Oct. 1815, in Kinloch, *A Hellish Business*, p. 226.

<sup>9</sup> Lieutenant George Bowles, 13 Feb. 1816, in Bowles, *A Guards Officer in the Peninsula and at Waterloo*, p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 187-200.

is only mentioned by their desperate loss in killed and wounded; where as reading the history of the battle of Waterloo, a civilian is led to imagine that the Guards and hussars fought the whole of the hard fight!’<sup>11</sup> Captain Jonathan Leach of the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles felt that post-war press coverage of Waterloo unduly favoured Scottish regiments: ‘convincing nine-tenths of the people in England, and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand in Scotland, that the Scottish regiments were the only people who pulled a trigger on the left of the British position throughout the whole.’<sup>12</sup>

Stuart Semmel has highlighted how the story of Waterloo was communicated to the British people through material objects, such as museum exhibitions displaying objects from the battle, which allowed civilians to interact directly with the ‘memory’ of Waterloo.<sup>13</sup> Through the distribution of the 1816 Waterloo medal, the first universally awarded British campaign medal, the Battle of Waterloo provided a physical emblem by which veterans could communicate their service to civilians. The Waterloo medal also created an exclusionary sense of memory, with the lack of a comparable decoration for other veterans proving to be a point of discontent during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially amongst Peninsular War veterans.<sup>14</sup> For Peninsular Veterans, the Waterloo medal was emblematic of their erasure from the collective memory of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Captain John Blakiston wrote in his memoir that Peninsular veterans were: ‘ribandless and unnoticed, while his more fortunate fellow-soldier, who, perhaps, never saw a shot fired before or since that one occasion, struts about with his Waterloo medal!’<sup>15</sup> Without recognition, junior officers were concerned that their service would fade from memory, particularly in light of the awarding of the Waterloo medal. Jonathan Leach, a captain with the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles in the Peninsula, felt that the lack of medals for Peninsular veterans would see their service fade from memory: ‘if the names of Vimeira, Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria &c. &c. should be partially remembered, the actors in those scenes (with a few exceptions) will be entirely forgotten.’<sup>16</sup> Sherer reflected that the veterans of the Battle of Albuera: ‘had the mortification of walking, unnoticed and undecorated, by the side of the more fortunate heroes of Waterloo.’<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Crowe, *An Eloquent Soldier: The Peninsular War Journals of Lieutenant Charles Crowe of the Inniskillings, 1812-14*, ed. Gareth Glover (Barnsley, 2011), p. 304.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), p. 398.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Semmel, ‘Reading the Tangible Past: British Tourism, Collecting, and Memory after Waterloo’, *Representations*, 69 (2000), pp. 9-37.

<sup>14</sup> Jasper Heinzen, ‘Transnational Affinities and Invented Traditions: The Napoleonic Wars in British and Hanoverian Memory, 1815-1915’, *English Historical Review*, 127 (2012), p. 1422.

<sup>15</sup> John Blakiston, *Twenty Years in Retirement*, Vol. II (London, 1836), p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831), p. 405.

<sup>17</sup> Moyle Sherer, *Recollections of the Peninsula* (London, 1825), p. 164.

Medals had been awarded to officers in the Peninsula; however, these were piecemeal and usually awarded by regiments or to senior officers.<sup>18</sup> Junior officers who were Peninsular War veterans saw these medals as reflective of a system which favoured senior officers, or well-connected elites. William Grattan, a former lieutenant of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot who served extensively in the Peninsula, campaigned for a Peninsular medal throughout the nineteenth century, collecting his arguments in the 1845 tract, *The Duke of Wellington and the Peninsular Medal*. Grattan stated his belief that the military system was prejudiced against junior officers, including those who had demonstrated incomparable bravery by leading the storming of fortresses: 'what medals were given, to those officers who led forlorn hopes in the Peninsula? The question is easily answered. The officers who volunteered this dangerous service WERE THEN SUBALTERNS!' <sup>19</sup> Despite receiving a Waterloo medal, Leach argued along similar lines for his Peninsular army comrades. Leach cited the example of junior officers who: 'served throughout the whole of those seven years, without have received a single badge. And why? Simply because they held no higher rank than that of captain or subaltern during the succession of campaigns, and consequently never commanded a battalion in a general action.'<sup>20</sup> Eventually, despite opposition from Wellington, veterans of other campaigns of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were awarded the 1848 Military General Service Medal.

Junior officers' scramble for post-war glory fed into an established interpretation of their military experiences which was defined by their status as junior officers. The sense of obscurity and unfulfilled aspiration which is present in veterans' campaigns for a decoration in the mould of the Waterloo medal is reflective of the general sense of obscurity which characterised many junior officers' writings throughout the war and which was a feature of their post-war memoirs. In railing against the preference given to senior or well-connected officers, junior officers revealed their aspirations for glory and promotion, and also their angst that these went unfulfilled. This was reflective of a wider identity and set of sensibilities which were the product of junior officers' middling status within the army. Junior officers' place within the military hierarchy was complex, and was characterised by the tension between the authority and status which a commission bestowed on junior officers, and the subordination they experienced at the hands of superior officers. These factors were not unique to this period; however, the specific conditions of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars likely contributed to the creation and consolidation of a coherent 'junior officer' identity in ways that were less likely in earlier conflicts, both inside and outside the army. Mass mobilisation vastly expanded the number of

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<sup>18</sup> Lesley Smurthwaite, 'Glory is Priceless! Awards to the British Army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in *The Road to Waterloo: The British Army and the Struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France*, ed. Alan J. Guy (London, 1990), pp. 164-83.

<sup>19</sup> William Grattan, *The Duke of Wellington and the Peninsular Medal* (London, 1845), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Leach, *Rough Sketches*, p. 403.

junior officers serving with the British army, and consequently brought together a large body of individuals with a shared set of values, characteristics, and aspirations. Their identity as junior officers was then reinforced by their military experiences. Furthermore, the sheer length of the wars allowed individual officers the time to reflect on their position within the military, and on the relationship between their values as members of Georgian society, and the realities of military service. Through their writings, junior officers were important in constructing and consolidating this identity, as they chose to represent themselves not only as soldiers or officers, but specifically as junior officers. This is especially the case with regards to officers' memoirs, which were written for a reading public who were eager for personal stories of war, a literary trend which dovetailed with, and legitimised, junior officers' experiences of the wars.

Often entering the army in their late-teens fired with the new found freedom their commission afforded them, junior officers could find the military profession to be somewhat disenchanting. The lack of agency inherent in their position saw junior officers see their rank as a trial they had to pass through before moving onto greater things via long-awaited promotion. Frustration with this position could engender anger at the established political and military hierarchy, including sympathy for radical politics. Junior officers were ambitious, with many seeking to make a career out of the army. Owing to their youth, junior officers looked to the paternal care of regimental commanders and the fraternal bonds of their fellow junior officers as something of a substitute for their being uprooted from their families. Yet, despite defining themselves by their military careers and being embedded within a 'regimental family', junior officers' identities were not wholly consumed by the military dimension of their lives. Families were an especially important civilian point of contact for junior officers. Letters flew between family members at home and in barracks or abroad, allowing family members to participate in family life. Furthermore, family and military identities regularly intertwined. Some officers entered the army as part of a family tradition, while others shared in their campaign experiences with their wives, children, or brothers.

Nor were military men solely products of the military. Junior officers were open to a wide range of influences from late-Georgian society, particularly the influences of polite masculinity. Junior officers' status as 'polite gentlemen' provided a model for male interaction between officers, while debates over honour were also informing how officers related to each other. Class distinctions between officers manifested themselves within the army, as elite regiments adhered to a more opulent concept of politeness than their more austere comrades in line regiments. As 'polite gentlemen', junior officers erected social and cultural distinctions between themselves and their men, which reinforced the military hierarchy while also encouraging officers to treat their men with humanity and sparking debate over the use of corporal

punishment in the army. In addition to the influences of gender and class, junior officers were also fighting in a 'British' army, in a war they first conceived of as an ideological struggle, which then evolved into a patriotic struggle for national survival. Serving within this patriotic British context reinforced junior officers' sense of 'European' identity, while contributing to a common sense of 'Britishness' between officers drawn from across Britain and Ireland.

Knowing more about this group can inform other aspects of the British world during the nineteenth century. Junior officers would help shape the British Empire. As demonstrated by Christine Wright, the lack of opportunities for former British officers in Britain saw them seek out careers in the colonies, as a steady flow of veterans, especially Peninsular War veterans, arrived in Australia as colonial administrators between 1820 and 1840.<sup>21</sup> Despite noting that subalterns' memoirs constituted a broadening narrative of the war, Kennedy has argued that subaltern's narratives of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars did not 'fundamentally question' the social and political status quo of Britain.<sup>22</sup> Junior officers were certainly keen to iterate their moral superiority to the rank and file, yet this did not preclude junior officers from questioning the military and political establishment, particularly when their hopes for promotion or recognition were frustrated. This could result in a number of officers questioning the system of awarding commissions and promotions by purchase, as well as reflecting negatively on how the British nation was governed by political elites. By campaigning for universal medals awarded on the basis of service and merit, rather than rank or social standing, former junior officers were actively arguing for a potentially subversive symbol of patriotism. Within this context, the role of former army officers in Britain's post-war political landscape requires further research.

That British junior officers of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars came to identify as junior officers as a result of their military experiences is illustrative as to the nuances which existed within the British military hierarchy of the late-Georgian army. Often portrayed as a homogenous block with a set of social and cultural sensibilities which distinguished officers from the rank and file, the British officer corps was instead characterised by ambiguity and conflicting ambitions. Junior officers certainly had more in common with their superiors than with the rank and file, and aspired to attain the lofty position occupied by senior officers; yet they also saw their lot in life to be markedly different from those who held high rank. Junior officers' view of the world and themselves was firmly from the middle, a perspective which saw junior officers develop a collective sense of their place within the British army.

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<sup>21</sup> Christine Wright, *Wellington's Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire, c. 1820-40* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 12-30.

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, *Narratives*, p. 196.

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